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## The Week-end Review

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# WHO IS TO CONTROL THE B.B.C.?

that mixed grill of questions raised by Mem- s on the adjournment of the House of Commons week for the summer recess, Mr. Petherick, onservative, tackled Mr. Bracken on the con- ution of the B.B.C., and drew an interesting wer from him. Mr. Petherick objects to the sponsibility of Broadcasting House. Con- utionally it is attached, by a highly convenient tic, to the Minister of Information who is thus bled to answer any criticism of it by disclaim- control. The result, as Mr. Petherick com- ined, is that its activities cannot really be ctively challenged in the House and there is, ffect, no general control over it. He urged that annual report should be presented by the .C. to Parliament, which should be obliged discuss the general conduct of the Corporation two days in every year. Mr. Bracken replied t our broadcasting organisation was the best he world, though it had made many mistakes; said that the charter of the B.B.C. was nearing end, and he thought that M.P.s would do a y good job of work if they pressed for a mplete examination of the whole set-up of the rporation.

t is essential that such an examination should made, though we cannot feel very optimistic ut the result. The problem of democratising adcasting is only part of that tremendous blem which is riving and racking our society, w to preserve the elements of democratic free- m, which were precariously established by eralism in the simple, individualist world of nineteenth century, and adjust them to the ss-produced totalitarian world which is taking place. The totalitarian, governmental control the air leads inevitably to Goebbels and the ss-production of opinion by a governing class clique. No more effective instrument for grading and enslaving the masses has ever been ented. The individualist solution, which has n tried out in America, is to leave broadcasting the private control and competition of commer- l companies. The results of a commercialised, ertisement-ridden broadcasting system are not ouraging, and it is doubtful whether the demo- tic Father Coughlin is to be preferred as a mass- ducer of public opinion to the Nazi Goebbels the Fascist Gayda.

The B.B.C. is the usual British compromise between incompatibles. In theory it is not controlled by the Government, because it is a Corporation, and is not a private monopoly because it is called a Public Corporation with a Charter bestowed upon it by Parliament. It professes therefore to make the best of both worlds, avoiding the commercialisation of opinion in the one and the suffocation of opinion in the other. In practice things work out rather differently. What the democrat hoped for from this arrangement was that the Governors would impartially maintain freedom of opinion on the air by allowing each and every side to have its say, while at the same time preventing the manipulation or suffocation of opinion by the Government. Thus the listener would always have his free choice between the whitest white and the blackest black with every shade of grey between them. Actually the B.B.C. produces a compromise between white and black, and that inevitably is a monotonous and depressing grey. What happens is that the vociferous extremists on both wings always protest vigorously at anyone being allowed to say anything with which they disagree. Government departments, like the Foreign and Colonial Offices, which exercise an informal censorship on "political" talks, blue pencil unorthodox opinions and therefore exert a powerful influence in the same direction.

The staff, often genuinely eager to be impartial and to preserve freedom of opinion, gives way under this incessant war of nerves and adopts the Civil Service motto: "Anything for a quiet life." The result is the banning of unorthodox opinion. In a democracy this tells politically much more against the Left than the Right and nearly always means that the B.B.C. becomes a mouthpiece of the Government and of those in power. For a broadcasting system which bans the unorthodox is necessarily a perpetual and powerful supporter of the *status quo*, and nearly all governments are lovers of the *status quo*.

It is questions such as these which M.P.s must consider in their examination of the Corporation's Charter and constitution. Reform will not be easy. Complete transfer to private and competitive control is unthinkable, though it is worth considering whether a limited amount of private competition is not desirable. Another very important question is that raised by Mr. Petherick. The war has only emphasised the tendency of the Government to usurp, by various methods, control of broadcast opinion. This is, to some extent, inevitable in the conditions of modern life. But if this be so, it is essential that the B.B.C. should be made responsible to Parliament.

### Replanning the War

At this forthcoming conference President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill will be faced with a situation which has altered radically from the standpoint both of military operations and political problems since they last met. On the military side, developments on the Eastern Front have surpassed the most sanguine expectations. Profiting by the costly defeat incurred by the, central group of German armies in their unsuccessful offensive last month against the Kursk bulge, the Russians have staged a counter-offensive which already begins to have more than local significance. Three stages so far in the execution of the Russian plans are clearly discernible. First, the successful reduction of the Orel salient—a preparatory, semi-defensive operation designed presumably to eliminate what had long been a standing threat to Moscow. Next came a series of what were apparently feint attacks against the Donbas both from the east an the north. Finally, an attack was launched from Byelgorod in a westerly and south-westerly direction aimed at the rearward communications of Kharkov. Already in this sector the German defensive positions appear to have been breached on a wide front; the enemy's tenure of Kharkov is patently precarious; and, as the Russian advance towards Poltava makes headway, a threat may soon develop against the lines of communication on which the whole of the German forces in the Donbas rely.

### How Many Fronts?

With the Red Army thus committed to operations on a grand scale it is perhaps not surprising that Moscow Radio should be inclined to revive for the benefit of Western listeners the question of Anglo-American contributions to the common effort on land. Russian opinion appears to be fully appreciative of the important part played by the intensified strategic bombing of Western Germany; and the Allied success in conquering almost the whole of Sicily in a single month has been hailed in Moscow as a welcome earnest of better things to come. What the Russians, however, naturally want to see is development of Anglo-American military operations on a scale which would not merely "pin" the existing number of Axis divisions in the West and in the Mediterranean, but would compel the Axis High Command to withdraw an appreciable number of German divisions from the Eastern Front. The task for the President and Premier is to consider how far and how quickly this demand of the Russians can be met. The answer must depend in part on military factors which obviously cannot be made public; but speed may also be determined to a considerable extent by the political strategy adopted by Britain and the United States towards Italy and—one degree more remotely—towards potentially revolutionary elements in Germany. It is once more to be deplored that the conference between the President and Premier is taking place without the participation of Mr. Stalin.

### Commonwealth or Federation?

Mr. Amery's speech on Monday at York was welcome in so far as it was one of the few attempts Ministers have made to define their intentions about the future of Europe. There our congratulations end. Mr. Amery, who used to favour the idea of a European federation, now tells us that "the growth of nationalism everywhere" renders such a solution impossible. That the Nazis, by their oppressions, may have inflamed nationalism for a time is possible. But they have also demonstrated that independence, as the nineteenth century conceived it, is in the world of to-day an empty legal fiction. No State which hesitates to abandon something of its sovereignty to a supra-national group can hope to survive. We agree with Mr. Amery in dismissing Mr. Clarence Streit's scheme as wholly impracticable, but his substitute is equally unpromising. Like General Smuts, he offered the British Commonwealth as the future model for international government. It has one focus of power round which the Dominions are content to group themselves in a relationship which can be loose and informal because they share a common origin, a common culture and the same legal system, not to mention the Crown. But in the world there are three such foci of power, and even in Europe there are two. Apart from this difficulty, it is surely fantastic to suggest that France or Italy, Poland or Spain, could ever stand to us in any relationship comparable to that which links us to the Dominions. So long as we play with this misleading model, we shall not advance one step towards an integrated Europe. It is precisely because ties of blood and a common origin are lacking that we must build up an institutional structure. In that task we shall fail and deserve to fail, if we think in terms of a Commonwealth with its centre in Whitehall. The penalty for that arrogance might well be that Europe will integrate and even federate without us and perhaps against us

### Sweden Puts Her Foot Down

The cancellation by Stockholm of German transit facilities through Sweden has come as no surprise The Swedish public had long been angrily demanding it. And Hitler, too, who for some time has been fortifying not only the Norwegian-Swedish frontier but also the Danish coast opposite Sweden had been expecting it. The fact that simultaneous announcements were made in Stockholm and Berlin cannot disguise the fact that the cancellation was unilateral. A Swedish broadcast for abroad has made it plain that the decision was made "in the interests of Sweden's good relations with the belligerents and more particularly with her Nordic sister nations." Sweden's special feelings towards Norway were shown in another Swedish broadcast which said that on the question of asylum for political refugees Sweden will not be told what to do, but added that Quisling, in certain eventualities, would not be regarded as a political refugee, but as "an offender against Norwegian law and a criminal." Dr. Goebbels's radio, while not actually claiming another "Orel victory," justifies the "joint cancellation" on the ground that the facilities surrendered had lost their earlier advantages. This does not tally with an official Swedish statement that, during the negotiations, which took place in Berlin, "no concessions were made by Sweden."

### Relief and Liberation

The approaching liberation of Occupied Europe will confront the United Nations with a vast problem of relief for the peoples whose whole economic life has been distorted or destroyed by Nazi exploitation. Many lessons with regard to the necessary preparations for such relief can be learnt from the first report of the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation on its Mission in North Africa. The field of its work was far smaller and its tasks simpler than what they will be in Europe after three years of plunder and oppression, but the work of the Mission is a miniature model for the future work of U.N.R.R.A. the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Currency problems, which are expected to be grave in Europe itself, proved to be less important than the fair distribution of commodities, since on the whole the liberated people were able to pay for what they wanted. A certain amount of gift relief was necessary, especially for people who had fled to Tunis from their homes and for some 1,500 Jews and many homeless European nationals. It seems a good precedent that while the issue of ration tickets was in the hands of the American authorities, the actual distribution was left in the hands of local citizens. In fact, the O.F.R.R.O. Mission seems to have worked as much as possible through existing social agencies and local leaders. The distribution of milk to Arab children was arranged through the Sheik of Medina, official head of the Moslem population in the Tunis area. There are more ambitious plans for the reconstruction of local economic activities such as the fishing and olive oil industries, but it is not possible at present to judge what the results will be. There are grounds for satisfaction here because North Africa can give considerable assistance to the Allied offensives if her economic life is revived and because the work of O.F.R.R.O. has given substance to our claim to liberate and not exploit.

### U.S.A. and the Currency Plans

Some American financial pundits object to the currency plans, condemning the United States or "White" plan equally with British or "Keynes" plan, on the ground that they "would enable nations to buy merchandise without being able to pay for it." This sounds very businesslike and hard-headed, but actually, from an American point of view, it is the height of folly. The chief problem for the U.S.A. is that she cannot find a way under *laissez-faire* capitalism in peacetime to keep her own productive capacity at work. She therefore has no desire to employ foreign workers, by importing the goods which they produce. But, for the same reason, she has a potential surplus available for export. The Keynes plan would allow her to export without importing for a considerable time, and would allow a breathing space in which she could find a long-term solution of her problem, either by raising internal purchasing power, so as to use her productive capacity to raise the standard of life of her own people, or by going in for a policy of long-term development loans to countries needing capital. The White plan, and the Canadian plan which follows it very closely, compromise with the point of view of the financial pundits. The notion is that U.S.A. should place a limited amount of dollars at the disposal of the "Stabilisation Fund," and that these dollars should be rationed among the countries whose imports exceed their exports. Under this plan, the world would be compelled to discrim against U.S. goods, so as to cut down su imports from U.S.A. to the dollar ration. even this goes too far for the pundits. want the world to cut down its surplus im from the U.S.A. to zero. How long will it the U.S. exporting interests to realise what means for them? We are told that the Mi West farmer is not going to milk his co "give a quart of milk to every Hottentot." to feed the milk to needy American babi "rank Bolshevism." The only solution slaughter the cows.

### Can Industry Save Itself?

Meanwhile, American business men are gro aware of the nature of the problem which confront them after the war. An unofficial mittee has been set up to study the mean preserve full employment in U.S.A. after the without reliance upon Government action. Hoffman, the chairman of this committee, the issue very clearly: "Unless we achieve productivity to provide most of this employ in private industry we are not likely to have private industry left after the war." The has raised the U.S. output by 60 per cent. the 1940 level, and of this about half is accou for by war output. He sees the task of pr enterprise as being to replace war by civ output so as to prevent the national income relapsing to the peacetime level. Can pr enterprise fulfil this task? On paper, no d it is quite feasible. The secret of maintai employment (without bringing about a r tribution of real income, which is certainly the objective of the industrialists) is to mai a steady level of investment adequate to ab the savings generated by the high level of inc The leaders of industry may make a bargain each other. If you invest so much, I will i so much. So long as they keep it up, even i face of the fall in the rate of profit which is b to set in sooner or later as capital accumu they can work the trick. The strain on loyalty to each other would be severe at t but perhaps a lively sense of the political sequences of another great slump would sufficient to hold them together. The que would remain whether American labour and American public at large prefers to have economic planning done for them by the industrialists rather than by Government. new system would not be very easy to put a in terms of individual enterprise and democr

### The House Rises for the Recess

Last week's debates found the House restless mood, partly owing to excitement a the developing International position and p owing to staleness at the end of a long ses The Labour Party, despite Churchill's st opposition, managed to get in a debate on political issues of the war. Taking advanta Parliamentary procedure Aneurin Bevan r the question on the Third Reading of the solidated Fund Bill. He hit about him forthright manner, irritating the Tories bracketing General Giraud with Admiral Da Quintin Hogg thought Bevan's speech partic mischievous and irresponsible. Many La Members, however, felt that he was only s about Victor Emmanuel and Badoglio what people in the country were thinking. Green and Ivor Thomas backed Bevan up with a s attack on A.M.G.O.T. Eden, in reply, tri turn wrath away, but was not very successf doing so. It seems likely that the House meet again before the official end of the R and that a full-dress debate on the political of the war will then take place.

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# PRESSURE FOR BADOGLIO

HE difficult battle round Mount Etna moves ward, rather slowly, but with unbroken ccess. But what is happening on the main- nd? The stubborn resistance of the Germans Sicily has a purpose and it is reasonable to ppose that it has some close relation to what happening in Rome and Milan. The Germans e gaining time, we may be sure, for their own ds, which may mean that they are bent on laying the final capitulation of Italy until they ve dug themselves in elsewhere—certainly the Balkan Peninsula and at the head of the driatic, perhaps on the line of the Po. About e intentions of Marshal Badoglio and the gligible King little can be guessed with any nfidence. But two assumptions may be risked. rst, they are playing the German game in eir own devious way and will continue to play as long as their fear of their allies surpasses eir fear of the United Nations and their own ople. Secondly, while they have thrown ussolini overboard and flung the fasces after m, they are still using the technique of his lice State to throttle the Italian nation. We ed not ascribe the puzzling behaviour of doglio to any subtle and far-sighted plan. e is dodging and balancing, like the oppor- nist he always was, satisfied if he can stave off a mocratic revolution for a week or month.

On this reading of an obscure situation, at can be done from our side to force a de- ion? The operations in Sicily are proceeding, may be sure, as rapidly as the difficult country mits. It was, as we see it in retrospect, a stake to allow the mainland even the six days' spite from aerial attack which General Eisen- wer mentioned in a broadcast to the Italians. e double pressure which the Roman Govern- ent has to measure from hour to hour, the reat from our forces and the threat from the lian people, must be increased until they rpass the weight of the German incubus. e soldiers, we take it, will not be reluctant to ss their attack on every strategical objective ey can reach. But it is only too clear that we ve fumbled in our political warfare and that means by which we may hope to enlist the lian masses actively on our side have never en thought out. Here we labour under e disadvantage which we cannot escape. It probable that the average man in Italy has e overmastering wish—to hear the last of the mbers overhead; to slide back into neutrality ain; to enjoy peace, if possible with honour, t if not, then at any price. That wish we nnot grant. We need the roads that lead ough Italy to the inner stronghold of the emy and we must have the use of her airfields d ports. But that is all we need. We can ease our prisoners; we can assure the weary nscripts on the mainland and in the Balkans t they shall return to their homes and their lds. Further, we can guarantee the people ad. This has been said, and well said in neral Eisenhower's broadcasts and underlined our conduct in Sicily.

There, to our regret, our congratulations end. e first mistake was to use the phrase "uncondi- nal surrender." It suggests a degree of severity t is not in our minds. It offends instincts of f-respect on which we should not trample. it meant that we will have no dealings whatever h the Dictators, that is the unanimous resolve the allied peoples. But it conveyed much more n that. It can be interpreted as a refusal give any assurances even to a revolutionary ernment which may overthrow the Dictators. at is not the way to promote a revolution. If had meant to do that, we should long ago have d, what we have not even hinted, that any cerely democratic regime, on whose co- ration we can rely in the liberated Europe of morrow, may hope for better terms than we uld grant to a people which made no effort to over its freedom. The chief effect of Fascist paganda has been to spread general cynicism. The Italians ceased long ago to believe in their Duce: but as yet they have no faith in us. We should define our intentions in plain words.

If Italians wish for anything almost as ardently as they wish for peace, it is to see the end of the system that oppressed them. Badoglio's oligarchy may not be precisely Fascism, but it is not freedom. We could have done much to help the people and the united National Front of Action to overthrow it. We could have brought back the exiles who chafe at their impotence on the far side of the Atlantic. We could have liberated the thousands of political prisoners, South Slavs as well as Italians, who still endure their misery on Lipari and the neighbouring islands. We could have given the popular movement of liberation a base in Sicily from which to win the mainland. But our one political gesture has been to offer our congratulations to the House of Savoy. A less effective way of putting pressure on Badoglio and hastening his overthrow no amateur could have invented.

# DEMOBILISATION

At the end of the last war the plans for demobilisation had all been neatly made, as far as the armed forces were concerned. But they failed to work. The idea had been that men should be released from the Services roughly at the rate at which industry could be expected to be in a position to absorb them, preference being given to those who had jobs waiting, or belonged to categories of labour of which there was a short supply. But it was soon discovered that men would not wait patiently under military discipline until their time came. There was trouble in the camps, not only in this country, but also abroad; and the Government speedily came to the conclusion that it was safer to have civilians hanging around without jobs than soldiers under orders without duties, except a make-believe which it became more and more difficult to sustain. The orderly plans made in Whitehall had to be scrapped and a system of "out-of-work donation" for the returning soldiers had to be improvised on a much larger scale than had been intended.

As against these abortive plans of orderly demobilisation for the armed forces, there were almost no plans for sorting out the discharged munition workers. An attempt made by certain Civil Servants to get unemployment insurance extended to the great majority of industries during the war was defeated by the opposition to paying contributions for no return while the war lasted; and only a small group of trades was added to those which had been insured before 1914. Consequently, war emergency "out-of-work donation" had to be provided for munition workers as well as for demobilised soldiers and sailors on a non-contributory basis, until the delayed extension of unemployment insurance could be brought about—with the result that the unemployment fund was given no time to build up adequate reserves before the onset of the post-war slump.

One of these errors of last time cannot be repeated on this occasion; for unemployment insurance now extends to nearly all trades, including all those which will be discharging large bodies of workers at the end of the war. There will be unemployment benefit, even if there is not work—though no one yet knows whether it will be on the scale proposed by Sir William Beveridge or not. As for the demobilisation of the armed forces, we have it on the authority of Sir William Jowitt that careful plans are being worked out; but we cannot yet tell whether these plans are likely to prove more workable when the time comes than those which had been got ready in 1918.

On this occasion, men called up for the armed forces have been given a positive assurance that, where they were in jobs, they shall have them back. Everyone, however, realises that in a very large number of cases this assurance cannot hold good. For one thing it has meant, with successive call-ups, that many employers have become legally bound to reinstate quite a number of persons in the same job; and for another, what is to happen when the employer has gone out of business or has so changed the character of his business that it needs a quite different kind of labour? There are, no doubt, many big firms, especially among those which have undergone severe contraction during the war, in which the guarantees of reinstatement will present no very grave difficulties. But over industry as a whole there will be hundreds of thousands of difficult cases if employers are called upon to obey the letter of the law. Of course, in practice the difficulties will be comparatively small if in general jobs are plentiful, but very awkward indeed if unemployment is allowed to become rife.

One great problem that must worry those who have to make plans for demobilisation is that of the uncertainty about the way the war will end. This time, there are in effect two wars—the war in Europe and the war in the Far East, which we are pledged to carry on with all our might when we have broken the power of the Nazis in the West. How large an armed force will be needed to fight this war after hostilities have ceased in Europe, and for how long? Again, in Europe, will the collapse of the Nazis mean that most of our forces can come home almost at once, or will there be a period of continued fighting and perhaps the need for a large army of occupation for a considerable time? In one way, anything that slows down the rate of demobilisation may appear to simplify the problem of the orderly reabsorption in industry of men and women from the fighting forces and the war trades. But anyone who canvasses opinion in the forces will soon discover among them a considerable amount of anxiety lest, by the time they are able to get home, all the jobs, or at all events all the better jobs, may have been taken.

There is, moreover, the question on what basis demobilisation ought to proceed. Should it be in the main by units, or should each individual be considered as a separate case? If the basis is individual, what should be the relative weights given to length of service, family responsibilities, the existence of a job ready to be taken up, or the possession of a special kind of skill for which an urgent demand exists? If bricklayers and plasterers are urgently needed for housing schemes, should all bricklayers and plasterers be let go before fathers of young families who have seen service through the greater part of the war? If preference is given to men of certain trades or skills, should this apply wherever the men are—for example, even if they happen to be in the Far East—or only to men who are in Great Britain or in certain parts of Western Europe or North Africa? Should the onus be on the employer to claim back a man he wants for urgent work, or should the man be able to apply for release himself, on occupational as well as on family grounds?

These are only a few of the difficult questions that have to be answered before any general plan of demobilisation can be drawn up. It is plain from their nature that any workable plan is bound to be a patchwork of compromises between conflicting claims. The Service authorities will manifestly fight against any proposals which will interfere with the efficiency of the units they will have to keep still under arms for continued warfare; and this is likely to mean that individual claimants will get short shrift at their hands if they happen to be stationed in theatres of war where hostilities are still in prospect. It is understandable that the Government is unwilling to have its plans of demobilisation discussed in public at this stage. Any announcement of them would be likely to arouse serious discontent among those who saw in them the prospect of being kept in uniform while others were going back to civilian life; and the numbers who would be pleased would almost certainly be very much smaller than the numbers who would be annoyed.

One important factor in reconciling the needs of industry with the fears of men in the forces that every individual released for a job must mean an increasing risk of unemployment, or of inferior work for those who are kept in uniform, will be the policy that is followed in training men and women for post-war jobs. For example, if there is to be for some time an army of occupation in Europe, is it to be left kicking its heels with nothing to do, or is a real attempt to be made to offer its members an opportunity of training for various kinds of skilled work, with an assurance that there will be jobs to go to for those who take advantage of the chances offered them? Here, however, comes in the difficulty that men who are to be trained while they are abroad and in uniform will presumably have to be trained under military control. Will the Trade Unions stand for this, or will they be afraid that such training will be used to provide a supply of "blackleg" labour? If such training is to be undertaken, it seems clear that the terms will have to be carefully negotiated with the Trade Unions well in advance. Is this being done?

One way of running an army of occupation would be to continue compulsory calling up after the main war is over, and to send abroad the new recruits and young men just reaching military age—to undergo the greater part of their training abroad and to serve as the army of occupation while they were being trained—of course, with a sufficient stiffening of older and more experienced men. This course has its dangers; but it has attractions as well, in making it easier not to keep men who have done their whack in unwilling service when there is no more serious fighting to be done. We are not advocating this method; but, if it is being considered, it is obviously important that the young men thus called up shall be given the opportunity of becoming good workmen as well as soldiers, and the case for providing technical instruction as well as general education as a part of the service conditions abroad will be strengthened. Moreover, the need will exist at home as well, if it is proposed to continue any form of compulsory national service. There will be so great a relative shortage of *young* workers after the war, on account of population trends as well as of war casualties, that it will be imperative to tolerate no waste of capacity among them. If national service is to go on, it must be of such a sort as to make those who pass through it better at the arts of peace as well as of war.

Finally, it is evident that demobilisation of the armed forces, which is bound to involve serious difficulties in any case, will be much more difficult if the fear of unemployment remains lively in men's minds than if it can be to a large extent removed. This is no mere question of promising Social Security in the form of unemployment and other benefits, no matter on how adequate a scale. The fear of unemployment will be lessened by such provision, but it will not be exorcised. After all, few men want to live on "doles," even if they regard them as theirs of right and not of mere charity. Most men want jobs which will enable them to maintain their households under decent conditions and to maintain therewith their own self-respect and sense of social usefulness.

In other words, a policy of "full employment" is necessary to the carrying through of any orderly plan of demobilisation, as the only means of avoiding a struggle to get released soon in order to take a high place in the queues for jobs. It is not enough to say, as Sir John Anderson said in the Beveridge debate, that the Government will "do its best" to follow a policy of high employment. Every government will say as much as that; for naturally every government would sooner industry were prosperous than depressed. The question is what the Government proposes actually to do in order to bring about, and to sustain, conditions of "full employment"; and there are, in this sphere, no such reasons as there are in relation to the details of demobilisation policy for keeping secret what is being planned. The more the Government can say about the steps it means to take for the maintenance of employment, the less uneasy the members of the armed forces will be about their future, and the less inclined to ask awkward questions about the Government's demobilisation projects.

# A LONDON DIARY

[During Critic's absence on holiday Tom Driberg, M.P. will be our guest diarist.—Ed. *N. S. & N.*]

The consoling reflection is that Badoglio's dilemma (and Hitler's) must be more awkward than our own. Otherwise, our political approaches to Italy remind me of the motto on a pottery ash-tray I once bought in Rome: *Chi po non vo, chi vo non po, chi sa non fa, chi fa non sa—et cosi il mondo mal va.* All the same, I agree with those who argue that, having demanded unconditional surrender, we cannot very well now demand less: Italian Army officers must be jibbing at so distasteful a phrase, but a withdrawal of it would have regrettable effects in all the other countries of Europe—not least in this country, where such a move might well be interpreted as a prelude to Darlanism. Those who defend unconditional surrender argue also that time is not necessarily against us and that the Germans cannot, in fact, pour troops into Italy and consolidate the Po line while we dicker and dither; apparently the Swiss reports that the Germans had already begun to do so were incorrect, just as (some say) the reports of *Communist* risings in Italy were circulated by the Badoglio Government to scare British big business. One reflection which occurs to me is that the sooner the Italians do capitulate, the more leniently we shall no doubt treat them—and this is most likely to happen when the popular pressure inside Italy does become overwhelming; and this, in turn, we can encourage or retard enormously by the nature of our propaganda, the firmness and liberalism or the woolliness of our promises, and by what we can or cannot claim to have done already for the people of Sicily.

* * *

I had the interesting experience last week of putting a Question to the Government and receiving an Answer which was both satisfactory and completely misleading—and implicitly admitted by the Government on the very same day to be so! My Question—provoked by the intimation that we "consult" the Americans but "inform" the Russians, and by the Prime Minister's later assurance of the Government's "consultation with their principal Allies" (who surely include the Russians?)—was "whether the political aspects of the Italian situation are discussed in close consultation with the Soviet Government." The Foreign Office replied, succinctly, "Yes, Sir." The same day, Lord Strabolgi quoted my Question and this Answer in the House of Lords and asked if, besides consultation, there were also agreement with the Soviet Government on the political aspects of the Italian situation. Lord Cranborne, replying for the Government, hastened to disabuse him of any such nonsensical notion: Stalin had been "kept fully informed" on Sicilian affairs . . . "he was told soon after Casablanca what was intended" . . . the Soviet Government "have been kept in full touch"—a slightly different picture from the one presented to the simple Member of the House of Commons. Cranborne did, however, say that the Soviet Government had endorsed the demand for unconditional surrender.

* * *

There were two entertaining sidelights on the Italian situation in last week's ecclesiastical press. *The Tablet* put this quaint twist on Aneurin Bevan's excavation of the Prime Minister's former fondness for Mussolini:

> If an English statesman took that view, over four years after the March on Rome . . . it is quite unreasonable to discredit King Victor Emmanuel for having thought the same. The truth is that the Fascist regime began, in its leader's words, not as a party but as "an athletic body of men"; that it remained opportunist; and that, after follow for a time the path of moderation of which settlement with the Church was the high-w mark, it settled progressively towards viol adventure in the second and final decade.

I like the genial meiosis of "violent adventure

Then *The Church Times* had a long and curio account of an encounter with Mussolini twe years ago in Sicily. Mussolini picked a red and held it dangling in his mouth. The ano mous writer had expected his face to be no and Cavour-like. I extract one paragraph, sur worthy of Hare or Trollope:

> I was soon undeceived. On he came with "Here-am-I" rose in his mouth, and a look on face which I do not like to put down on pap You may guess it when I say he showed every of character that I and all Christians try dilige and daily to weed out and crush and mort I had better dismiss it in two words. He had eye like a ferret and a jaw like a steel-trap.

Nor should strictly non-ecclesiastical, and ostensibly political, periodicals be overlook Writers in *The Tatler and Bystander* can relied on to express the sahib or snob point view in a peculiarly unguarded way. One of th calls the appointment of Lord Rennell of Rodd AMGOT "a good one" because "he has plenty of experience in this war of administer countries which we have occupied in the Midd East and Africa." That may be; "but," rush on the *T. and B.*, "his qualifications to remo Fascism from Sicily are even more convinci His father was Ambassador in Rome for elev years. . . . Even after his father had ceased be Ambassador, the family continued its co nection with Italy. *They had business inter there.*" The italics are mine; "convincin seems to me the oddest possible word to choo for such a portrait of an anti-Fascist.

* * *

Labour Party leader-writers are undoubte right in insisting that the party truce is electo only, not generally political. For instance, Lo Selborne, Minister of Economic Warfare, in foreword to a new booklet, *The Common Probl* lets fly pretty sharply at the other parties n allied with his own in the National Governme "To the Tory," he says, "the English people one great family presided over by the King, therefore the class-consciousness of Labour or disintegrativeness of Liberalism are to him al odious and born of varying degrees of en hatred, and malice."

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minis of Economic Warfare might say—Disintegrati ness my Foot.

*The Common Problem* is a compilation speeches and papers by the late Ronald Cartla Tory M.P. for King's Norton, who was, happily, killed in the war. He emerges from it supremely charming and fairly muddle-head Lord Selborne, after deploring the tarnishing the Tory Party's "honour" by such "c cessions to Liberalism or Socialism" as "pseu democracy in India or partial confiscation mining royalties and tithes," says that Cartl "certainly would have welcomed the Beveri Report, but not with that hysteria which has b displayed in some quarters where a short ti ago all these things were taboo."

* * *

> I say flatly that this proposal is inhuman I declare that morally it is dead wrong. . . . moral questions there is a limit. There I s speak the truth as I believe it. He ill serves native land who keeps a frightened silence w spiritual dangers threaten that have brought m empires than one to the ground.

Obviously a parson speaking—but on wh On commercial vice? On artificial insemina for humans? On religious education, eve No; it is the *Sunday Graphic's* fashionable Rev. W. H. Elliott commenting on the projec registration of women from 46 to 50. One of things said in the course of the row provoked this proposal is that if only we had more wo in Parliament the Government would never h dared try it on: in fact, the cry was set entirely by men, the only woman to interv (Miss Rathbone) denouncing it as a "stunt" pported by " the worthier sections of women's nion." Certainly no one wants to direct these er women into war work unless it is absolutely cessary; but why is it more " immoral " to do than to direct women of, say, 44? Where are special " spiritual dangers " in this proposal? are told that these are mothers and wives, me-minders. So are younger women. The rst kind of stooge is the one who sets up a nagogic hullabaloo on some minor issue and uiesces mutely in all the major demands of mmon. Members of the Labour Party (who e far more perturbed by the threat to send ys of 16 down the mines) suggested unkindly t the Tories were interested in these older men only because so many of their non-ential domestic servants and idle Bournemouth nts would be of that age; and pointed out that rking-class women always do work full time, way, till they are well over 60; so why the lden fuss?

* * *

Several periodicals have already quoted Sir ncis Fremantle's superb slip of the tongue ing the Population Debate (when, intending to ak of contraceptives, he proposed " legislation ontrol the sale of Conservatives "). Hansard it on record. But Hansard (in future so to be ed on its cover) has less obvious fun to offer, Here are two wild snatches of dialogue of ich I am particularly fond:

Viscountess Astor: Shame.

Mr. Maxton: Where is the shame? Will omebody get up and explain what was the wrong at they were doing?

Viscountess Astor: I do not think there is any-ing wrong.

Mr. Maxton: The Noble Lady said " Shame."

Viscountess Astor: Just for fun.

(July 16th, 1943.)

hen this, on April 20th last:

Sir J. Lamb: . . . What we are objecting to is e infringement of the susceptibilities and decencies f life.

Earl Winterton: Oh.

Sir J. Lamb: My Noble Friend is always willing make interjections. Will he allow others to press themselves as well?

Earl Winterton: I suppose I can say " Oh "?

Sir J. Lamb: My Noble Friend says it so often.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Will Hon. Members ease address the Chair and not each other?

Earl Winterton: On a point of Order. Is there ything disorderly in saying " Oh "? It was all said. If not, may I ask whether you will protect e from the attack of the Hon. Gentleman opposite?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There would be no need r me to intervene if Hon Members restricted eir observations to " Oh."

* * *

nother prominent 18 B-er and ex-Linker has released from detention. I should not be ll surprised if Mosley, whose health is bad, e also to be released. He would presumably p out ignominiously to a well-feathered -bed rather than stump the country as a tyr and possible disrupter: although I gather terms are not usually made with them, the etainees must realise that they will be watched, that noxious activities might get them quickly lled in " again. Recent releases follow a ved Parliamentary clamour by Tories of the eme Right; but Morrison would no doubt n that he is guided rather by the change in military situation. It may well be that he es to have almost all the 18 B-ers out of his ds by the end of the war. In some respects would be a shrewd policy: there would not he big " story " of the simultaneous release of dreds of them, increasing their potentialities mischief in the immediate post-war period. pressure group has been almost well organised gh to call itself the Friends of the 18 B-ers; ed, I believe a committee was actually formed. noteworthy that these gentlemen have only ted on behalf of upper-class detainees: dy bothers about the wretched little East End keeper whose head may have been turned by ist propaganda because he has had an un-nate experience with some Jewish business . I suppose that decent and honest old men General Sir George Jeffreys, M.P. for Petersfield, seeing the war as a simple, old-fashioned conflict between the military forces of various nations, just can't believe that men of their caste can possibly go wrong in a matter touching patriotism. Great stress is always laid on the fact that this or that detainee has had a distinguished record of service to his country. So had the late Sir Roger Casement.

* * *

Saddest true joke of the week: the word Amgot means, in Turkish, horse-manure.

TOM DRIBERG

## THIS ENGLAND

**A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Miss A. Filliter.**

**Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.**

Then I met Alderman J. Hoyles. Said he: " The war is nearly over? What do we want with a British Restaurant now?"—*News Chronicle.*

Portsmouth City Councillors donned their cricket flannels yesterday. It was not only a reminder of the happy days of peace when they regularly played the civic fathers of Southampton and Brighton, but also an indication of the turn of the tide in war.—*Portsmouth Evening News.*

Visits to the local refuse disposal works is one of the " attractions " of Wembley's holidays-at-home programme.—*Sunday Express.*

# ALIAS SIR GALAHAD

(After Lord Tennyson)

His right arm waves the goodly brand,
His right hand thrusteth sure,
The movements of his other hand
However, are obscure.
He frees the slave from shame and thrall,
His fighting arm is tough and strong,
The other is political
And near ten times as long.
So forth he fares and on he rides
Bedight in Anglo-U.S. mail;
He will not rest upon his quest
Until he finds the holy grail.

His right arm hath the foeman cleft
In many a shattering bout,
But still the conduct of his left
Full oft gives cause for doubt.
His right hand bears his broadsword clean,
His stainless armour is complete—
His left hand weaves a web unseen
Which trippeth up his feet.
And when his right has felled the foe
While pæans of neutral praise resound,
The self-same knight by left hand sleight
And leadeth to the Table Round.

In Moscow and in Leningrad
They watch with interest
The exploits of Sir Galahad
Upon his two-way quest.
To them it seems what is to do
Is a two-handed enterprise,
And sometimes they express the view
That both should synchronise.
And as he wendeth on his way,
They darkly, in a glass perceive,
Though pure in heart he rides apart
And keepeth something up his sleeve.

And from each liberated spot
Strange rumours start to buzz,
Whether the knight's right arm can wot
That which his left arm does.
His strength is as the strength of ten,
He calls for casques to carve and crack,
Yet ever and anon again
His left hand holds him back.
All-armed he rides in helm and mail
And pricks along his devious route—
He will not fail to find the grail,
Or else a working substitute.

SAGITTARIUS

# THE LAND OF THE FIVE WITHOUTS

AT the beginning of 1941, I had applied at the British Embassy in Pekin for a visa to the Middle East in order to join up with the Free French, but the Asiatic war broke out before the formalities were completed. I was blocked in Pekin and the only way of escape was through the mountains to the East. With the help of the 8th Route Army and the Chinese guerillas. But how, where, could I possibly find the guerillas? The people in Pekin are traditionally fond of animals, showing a touching interest in the guerillas, who, they think, are big monkeys, though they knew very little about the 8th Route Army. Japanese propaganda claimed one day that there was no such army at all, and the day after, that those non-existing guerillas were " red bandits " living on the top of the mountains and coming down to the valleys at night to ransack the villages, like the knights of the Chinese Robin Hood novel *All Men are Brothers.*

Thanks to the guidance of the guerillas I did not meet a single Japanese—except prisoners—in spite of the fact that they went after us when they heard that a large party, including three foreigners, had crossed the Shansi railway during the night of June 22nd. I did not carry a weapon throughout the whole trip. In these barren regions devastated by war, misery and famine, I travelled along highways for six months with greater safety than in the streets of Paris or Chicago, though I had on me $1,000 (U.S.) in cash. (By the way, I had not been one week in Bombay than my cigarette case and wristwatch had been stolen in a night club and a swimming pool.)

It is not accurate to say that there are in North China several Communist governments which are independent of Chungking. The truth is that large areas of Hopei, Shansi and Shensi provinces are defended by the former Communist army of Kiangsi, which migrated there during the Long March, and is still commanded by its old leaders. This Army, the 8th Route Army, organises the guerillas in North China. Since the Japanese War and the rise of the National Unity for Resistance to the Invaders movement, it has officially become part of the regular Chinese Army under the command of General Chiang Kai-shek. And it functions as an Army, not as a Government. The administrative power rests with the civil authorities, which form the so-called Border Governments. There are several of these, because huge districts are completely cut from each other through railways, roads or industrial districts heavily guarded by the Japanese. For instance, all the mountainous area south of Peking is like a huge mousetrap extending over two provinces, West Hopei and East Shansi.

This blockaded district is the Chin Cha Chi Pien Chü, or Border Government of Hopei and Chahar. It is a very rich district and had in 1942 the soundest currency in all Free China, standing at par with the Japanese Yen. West of this area, is the Government of North-west Shansi, lying between the Tatung railroad and the Yellow River, and defended by another group of the 8th Route Army. This territory is destitute and the people backward; its currency was quoted at hardly a quarter of the Chungking dollar. West of the Yellow River, out of reach of the Japanese, is the Yenan Government under President Lin Pai-chü; the old leaders of the 8th Route Army, Generals Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh, Ho Long, are also in Yenan.

These Pien Chü governments are self-supporting and self-contained. They are cut off on all sides by the Japanese, but even inside them the Japanese army is everywhere. Up to the Yellow River, and especially in Hopei, there is no place where the Japanese are farther than 10 or 15 miles away. The front is not a single one, but a cobweb of intermingled, moving lines, the guerillas raiding the very suburbs of the walled cities, held by the Japanese who now and then push their columns right into the valleys, burning everything and forcing the governments and headquarters to take refuge in the mountains until they withdraw again. During my escape through the Chin Cha Chi, we had often to walk during the night within 500 yards of Japanese positions. The Japanese were in front of us, behind us, right and left of us, everywhere. One morning, we saw one of their groups, with police dogs, going down a slope opposite ours. Due to the fact that they were looking down the valley and had the sun in their eyes, they did not see us, and our escort made us promptly take cover. That morning we thought the game was up.

Under such circumstances, the Border Governments cannot form a single administrative unit, they must be separated, separated between themselves, and separated, though not independent, from Chungking. They remain parts of the Central Government, to which their chairmen belong. China's guerilla controlled territory deserves to be called "The Land of Five Withouts"—without beggars, without opium, without prostitution, without corruption, and without unjust taxes. One could add a sixth: without any fuss. My impression is that a new China is developing in these guerilla regions.

After the American Universities were closed, students from Pekin and Tientsin came into guerilla-held villages to preach new ideals of patriotism, democracy and social reform. These young people, moved by an ardent patriotism and the desire for China's progress, have worked with the 8th Route Army, and taught the farmers something new to them—that the nation, and not the family, must be saved first, that the lot of the family can only be improved if the nation is saved. Thus, enlightenment has spread in Hopei, more than in Shansi and Shensi, because the farmers in these parts are much more backward than those in Hopei and Yenan. Life has always been more primitive in the former areas, and at the time I was there the 8th Route Army had held the region for only a year and a half. In Hopei, the farmer goes to the polls, and takes elections very seriously. Government is in the true democratic spirit, following the one-third system of representation—one-third Kuomintang, and one-third non-party. This system has shown excellent results, and foundations are well laid for popular representation in the future. Men and women enjoy equal rights throughout the territory. Only the old women have bound feet. Farmers are not oppressed by feudal taxes as in the old days, since a fair system of taxation has been worked out. Soldiers are under orders to pay for everything they use. They pay with tickets which the farmer can use in paying his taxes. Capital and Finance are as well protected in the 8th Army districts as anywhere, and the currency in Hopei is the most stable in all Free China. Living standards are stabilised, and first priority necessities are government controlled.

Economically, these territories must be self-contained in order to proceed with the war. Their problem is to produce enough food and clothing for the populations and the troops. This would be easy in Hopei, where except for the Japanese aggression conditions of life would be good. But Shansi and Shensi are much poorer provinces. Yet they also have succeeded so far, in spite of difficulties increasing every year. Some exchange of goods takes place between the Japanese occupied cities and the guerilla districts. Because of malaria, undernourishment, and lack of sanitation, epidemics are frequent, and people die by the hundreds. Yet drugs are almost unobtainable, except from the Japanese occupied territory.

I expected that enemy prisoners would be well treated, but the handling of 40 Japanese captives at General Nieh's headquarters surpassed all my expectations. They were better fed and better clothed than the guerilla soldiers: considering that the Japanese eat rice, General Nieh ordered that rice should be procured for them, while the Chinese soldiers only got millet. They had their own club, where they could play baseball and cultivate their national arts and games. I saw them taking part in sports. The only marks distinguishing them from others were singlets they wore with the inscription: "Japanese man received in China." They played football with General Nieh's officers and soldiers, and even his chief of staff took part. I wonder if that ever happens in Europe.

Let me now recall a last experience: as I passed one morning through a little village, destroyed and burned like all the others, a man ran after me and begged for drugs. He seemed to suffer from some venereal disease, and, thinking that all foreigners were doctors, he mistook me for one. But I could do nothing. I couldn't venture to give him any of my drugs not knowing which was the right one: too many other people anyway would need the few drugs I could spare. For a long time he would not believe that I could not help. Then, feeling still more miserable after the false hope of salvation my appearance had brought him, he gave a sob, so bitter and deep that I still feel uncomfortable when I think of it to-day. There are thousands of cases like that in the guerilla districts. Confucius said: "To those who suffer, give your heart; to those who hunger, give your rice." To-day, rice means money. Almost any one can give something to organisations helping China. Something must be done to save our friends, the Chinese 8th Route Army and guerillas, from starvation and sickness.

Now it happens that money, supplies and drugs are being sent to China through the United Nations. If the 8th Route Army and the guerillas do not get their share of them, it is due to a kind of ban enforced in Sian with the support of certain cliques in Chungking. At present in the paradoxical situation that has developed, the 8th Route Army and the guerillas find it easier to purchase drugs from the Japanese occupied areas than from the rest of Free China.

A poor army in a poor country, the guerillas are fighting, the guerillas are dying. They die of privations, thirst, exposure, and sickness. More than Japanese bullets, malaria kills them by the hundreds, and there is no quinine. Sanitary conditions are terrible. Even more than equipment, they need drugs. Guerillas who fight and die for China are fighting and dying for us. To care for them is our responsibility. To leave them without drugs amounts to drawing a line and to say: "North of this line, sick people are entitled to live; South of it, they have to die." Are we going to allow that to continue, and do nothing about it? I, whose life and freedom were saved by this people, I cannot. G. UHLRICH

## SOLDIER POLITICIAN

ONE midnight about this time of the year just over a century ago, a soldier, alone in the guard room of Birmingham barracks after sentry duty, felt impelled by the political situation to write an anonymous letter to a newspaper. The incident and its consequences are worth recalling to-day. The full narrative, which rivals Defoe in vigorous realism and rich detail, can be read in Alexander Somerville's *Autobiography of a Working Man*, but the book has unfortunately become scarce.

During that spring of 1832 excitement over the Reform Bill was extreme. The army was as deeply concerned as the civilian population and men in the ranks were vastly sympathetic. Some privates among the six troops of Royal North British Dragoons (popularly known as the Scots Greys) then stationed at Birmingham, had defied the military ban by attending political meetings, had even become members of the Unions. Somerville, serious-minded twenty-one-year-old Scot, was not one of these. An efficient and conscientious soldier, he deprecated any breach of regulations, and he had done his best to dissuade less punctilious comrades though he shared th political opinions.

But things had been happening. One Sund of that May the Birmingham artisans, dres in their decent best and mostly wearing the li blue ribbon of the Union, had strolled as us by the hundred in and out of the cavalry y to admire the Greys' scarlet cloaks and feath bearskins. A few days later 200,000 citizens, l by the banker Thomas Attwood, had assembl on Newhall Hill and had resolved, if need be, march to London and remain camped on Ham stead Heath till the Bill was passed. The Sund following, after prayers in the riding school, t Greys were given an order unprecedented peacetime and not heard in times of war si the eve of Waterloo. They were to spend the d rough sharpening their swords. The gates w locked so that neither civilian nor soldier mi pass. Somerville was one of a fatigue party to turning the grindstone. They all knew wh it meant. "Few words were spoken," he wri "We had more noise and probably looked l solemn at prayers in the morning than we did n grinding swords."

Yet they dared and contrived to make th sentiments clear outside of the barracks. Ano mous messages were scattered in the Birmingh streets and anonymous letters sent to the Duke Wellington, the King and the War Office. Th messages and letters contained no threats, b they declared in favour of reform and guarant non-opposition to any orderly methods the pu might take in seeking it. "If you do nothing b make speeches and go peaceably to present th though you go in tens of thousands the Greys w not prevent you." That is a specimen extr

Then came Somerville's go of sentry du Everybody else in the guard room was asleep, b some officer had left an anti-Reform newspa lying about. He read it. He read that the D of Wellington was *not*, as rumour had it, yieldi to reform because the army could not be trust and that there was equally no truth in the rep that the Greys had made known a determinat not to interfere with peaceable demonstratio Such notions were, he read, mere "fabricat of certain of the reform papers."

This was too much for Somerville. He down and wrote to the editor, anonymously b with cogency. A few days later, with a note t in proof of authenticity the letter could be i spected at the newspaper office, this extr appeared:

> As a private in that regiment, I have the mean knowing fully the opinions which pervade the r in which I serve. It was true that a few sent th names to the roll of the political union. But let one think that those who refrained from doing cared less for interests of their country. I, for o made no such public avowal of my opinions, I know it to be an infringement of military l but I was one who watched with trembling antic tion the movements of the people of Birmingh For while we ventured to hope that any collis between the civil and military forces would prevented, by the moral energies of the former, could not help having a fear that the unprincip and lawless, who are everywhere more or less to found, might take the opportunity of that tur in the national affairs, to commit outrages on p perty; in which instance, we should certainly h considered ourselves, as soldiers, bound to put do such disorderly conduct. This, I say, we sho have certainly felt to have been our duty; against the liberties of our country we would h never, never, never raised an arm. The S Greys have honourably secured a high charac in the defence of their country, and they would the last to degrade themselves below the dig of British soldiers, in acting as the tools of a ty The Duke of Wellington, if he sees or hears of t may assure himself that military government s never again be set up in this country.

Major Wyndham, who was the command officer during the absence on leave of Lieut.-C Lord Arthur Hill, was "a tall, dark-whisker pleasant-looking, middle-aged gentleman. character with the men was that of a mild, ami fficer, more likely to be ruled or imposed upon y others than to do wrong to anyone." A mis- ken judgment. Reading the letter on Sunday, lay 27th, he had the handwriting identified that me night in London (by extracting a sentimental oem from a girl's album), and he found that omerville, who was one of the few literate men the troops, was the author. At first suspicion d not fallen on him and he was even now neither ccused nor questioned. Instead, on the 28th, e received an order from a sergeant to appear in e riding school with a strange and unmanageble horse. He was a fine rider, but on that day, ter a series of exhausting and impossible orders, e was at last forced into disobedience with the mark, "I cannot manage this horse."

Put under arrest he spent the night in the guardouse. Next morning the regimental sergeantajor, uttering jeers and threats, conducted him the orderly room, where mild, amiable Major yndham was waiting. When questioned about e riding school incident, Somerville admitted t he had unfortunately disobeyed and that he s now very sorry for it. "Ah, but," said the ajor, taking up a newspaper which lay ready hand, "you are fond of newspapers, I undernd?" Proceeding to questions, Major Wyndm got his admission, declared him to be guilty treason, failed to elicit the names of sympathetic mrades, and had him returned to the guarduse. Within ten minutes he was summoned to ourts martial. But it was not until four in the ernoon when he was back in custody, that he rned what his punishment was to be—200 hes in the riding school before the regiment: *s for having disobeyed the sergeant!*

After a hundred lashes—and there can never ve been a better description of a flogging by the n flogged than this one—they stopped, because e's a young soldier," and he was taken to spital. He endured the ordeal without rum d without uttering more than one stifled groan. t on reaching hospital he spoke. "This shall heard of yet; I shall make it as public over gland as newspapers can make it." At the urt of Inquiry, which was held in July, that gle remark was quoted as evidence of his having ered threats.

England had none the less become informed, d Somerville found himself the hero of the hour. e Inquiry decided that Major Wyndham had cted injudiciously" and had been too preitate. The King expressed "his deep regret" t an officer so free from reproach should have nced a deficiency in discretion, while at the e time "nothing had appeared in the course the inquiry, to authorise any conclusion which uld reflect discredit on the purposes, feelings, motives of Major Wyndham; or which would ject his honour to just impeachment." In t everything in the pardon was lovely. Cobt shook Somerville by the hand and advised n against editors; Madame Tussaud offered n £50 if she might make and exhibit his effigy, d he could have had more if he would have pertted a theatre benefit. All the newspaper ibblers made copy out of him. Everybody s annoyed when he refused to countenance such ertisements or to appear on public platforms. was indeed more embarrassed by the results is punishment than he had been by the punishnt itself. Once he had a pot of beer thrown r him when, unrecognised, he vindicated freen of speech and action by refusing a bullying er to "drink Somerville's health." He epted just as much by public subscription as uld buy his discharge from the army. Shrink- from publicity he became a lonely man. Never he cease to regret that he had not been able bey the orders in the riding school. At heart was something of a Tory with a passion for ice and free speech and a deep contempt for mob.

All this, of course, is but one incident in an autography which ought to rank as a nineteenth- tury classic in its kind. Somerville lived to old. He took at least one more dramatic part contemporary politics, and he set down his itical convictions and his observations on men and things in a style which does more than credit to the son of a poor Scots farm labourer. But one has only to look at his photograph (it might be a portrait by a modern painter) to know what sort of man he was and how much England owes to his sort. "No acts of parliament," runs one of his summings up, "can make a population well clothed, well supplied with food, well lodged, and happy; but Acts of Parliament can remove the artificial hindrance to those desirable ends, and promote their accomplishment. Comfort and happiness depend on the self-exertions of those who seek them, and cannot be conferred by others. But so long as men are excluded from the political privileges of their birthright as men, it is natural for them to think that they could make themselves more comfortable and happy if they had the exercise of their natural rights." His fundamental belief was in "the universal brotherhood of mankind, which I daily hold, and never doubt upon; which I believe will as certainly be realised as I believe that *good*, and not *evil*, was the object of all creation, and is the end of all existence."

CATHERINE CARSWELL

# WRITING AND READING, AND BEING CRITICAL

THERE are no writers without readers. Even the writer who "writes only for himself," if such has ever existed, has one reader.

* * *

Stages in a writer's development:

(1) The false start. Pen in hand, like a peacetime guardsman with his sword, he wants "to become a writer." He can't write, he has to make a show.

(2) Self-investigation, autobiography, confessions, etc. No longer vanity but the truth about himself pushes him on.

(3) Discovery of terrain. After endless shames, self-abasement and lying, he begins to know, not himself only, but the bit of ground—a half-acre on the outskirts—which he alone can develop, which (should he fail as a writer) will go forever undeveloped. Conscience begins to work. The machinery of earning and of getting to know people has interfered, imposing its own duties. Every morning as he goes to work, to the restaurants where habit takes him, he will think of this unweeded terrain, knowing now that it's his, appalled by its insignificance and by the difficulty, under the eyes of passers-by, of ever making a beginning. For a start, he may go out on Sundays and in the evenings. He takes his coat off. His old friend ——, on the next plot, stripped to the waist, has almost finished his; but of course he has nothing else to do, and even lives there, in a hut of his own making.

(4) Next stage. Indifferent to everything except his task he works till the plot is finished. Maybe he'll never finish, and like Eliot or Valéry, will devote himself to elaborating the impossibility of his task; or like Rimbaud, he will have finished at eighteen, with nothing left to live for; or like Yeats, will go on scratching diligently, certain of his old age.

Many writers, especially in England, never get beyond stage (1). They strike an attitude, go on striking it, never discover either themselves or their aptitude and die happy. This, writing and reading being what it is to-day, is the royal road to success.

Or they remain bogged in stage (2): gruelling for their readers.

Or they achieve (3), but by then their youth and possibilities of genius have gone, and all that remains is a dogged and painful talent.

Genius is the capacity for skipping stages, for not spending in personal conflicts more than a surplus energy. One needn't go the whole way. Rousseau (the *Confessions*) is an example of genius at stage (2), Kafka at stage (3). Some writers —not necessarily great—reach stage (4). But there is no possibility of genius at stage (1).

No need to enlarge on the nature of genius, which explains itself and always, though not in cash and credit, succeeds. Undiscovered genius —is there such a thing? It's a contradiction in terms. What one can analyse is the talent. Every talent has its moments, over years, in middle and old age as well as in youth, of genius; and the object of every talent is to educate and tend such moments. They must be made to go a long way; they must be spread so thin! So Hardy writes, writes, writes his 500 poems, 50 of which perhaps show genius.

* * *

The reader. He, too, if not merely a poring eye, will pass through a number of stages corresponding with the writer's. (1) When he wants showy daydreams. (2) Self-discovery. (3) Interrelationship. (4) Masterpieces. But in his case it is not so much a progression as a continual shifting from one level to another. Masterpieces, for example, especially those of poetry and fiction, can attract readers long before they understand.

The reader takes and the writer gives. Like all uneasy relationships, this one produces hatreds and tensions; too quick a contempt on the one side, too icy an aloofness, broken by moments of hysteria, on the other. The average reader! How one loathes that ignorant, placid monster, flattered by the newspapers. Writing for the average reader means writing average books; as if there weren't enough of those already.

Literature (on its most distant terms) is the vintage, at the price of a *vin ordinaire*, poured into the reader's glass. Or it may be a blood transfusion without which the patient won't recover.

Every reader is a potential writer, and capable, in his turn and in however small a measure, of giving.

* * *

The critic is also a reader, but some steps advanced in understanding. At his best he is apparently not far behind the writer he is criticising; at his worst, a man in the street looking up at a skyscraper and pretending to see into the top room.

Critics are made and not born. On the negative side, lack of direction and impulse makes them what they are; such weakness is easily and (for them) satisfactorily covered by a loud or exact voice. You can't *be* the writer who penned *Hamlet*, but you can dislike his manners, you can point out where he went wrong, you can know more than he, you can go on talking long after he's dead. The secret of criticism is time's perspective; at the end of an avenue, where only the critic may walk, is Donne or Gautier or Melville. Towards that figure, immovable and framed by the years, the living can retreat. Out come the field glasses!—the critic is nothing if not "well-equipped." Find your avenues, then, if you're a critic, each with its corpse propped up on a seat at the farther end, and for a column or two you—*you*—can bring the deceased to life. The living—leave them alone, and they'll come home. By God, there's someone running.

There are no set rules or final values in criticism. Like any other writing it is a form of self-expression, good or bad according to the skill and honesty of the writer. Types of critic. The snob. The anti-poet (most common). The sharepusher. The John the Baptist. The don. The defender of proprieties, literary or moral. The conservative who catches echoes of the past. The liberal who sees in literature only "a criticism of life." The Red, always in at the dawn of something. . . . And nearly all critics like to think of themselves as judges. Ermine and black cap, precedents, jokes, deafness, the judicial pause, the rustled pencil notes, the dignity of this court, gentlemen of the jury, I now pronounce. . . .

Judgment? Don't know; don't think it means much.

Taste? Yes; but an infallible knowledge of one's own taste. It is more important for a critic to know what he likes, and precisely why and how he likes it, than to know his subject.

Among critics I know, necessarily, my own type—the ingrown or obsessional—best. Not literature in general, but a few writers—miserably few, I'm afraid—appeal to me. With difficulty and rarely I approach a new writer (new, that is, to me), I read the whole of him, I reread, I read him too much and so that he excludes all other reading, I read till he exists in a void; and that is the condition to fix, because if one waits the reaction will set in, it will be chewing over cold mutton. About many writers I have no opinion at all. Dante, Spenser, Fielding, Thackeray, Victor Hugo, Tennyson, Dryden, Scott . . . the list of books I wouldn't take to a desert island is impressive. Of course, I could read some of these more thoroughly, so as to construct an opinion, that would be fair and (such is one's sense of protective colouring) in character. But critics shouldn't dissimulate their boredoms. Has *Pilgrim's Progress* given me pleasure? No.

Literature, then, for the critic, may represent on a vaster stage than he can ever dream of, the possibilities in himself as a writer. His chosen writers have accomplished what, but for reading them, he might have had a go at. *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, perhaps, is the satire on humanity he might, given genius, have written; or he is fond of pretending he's Shakespeare (who isn't at times?), or he's good at Balzac; or Haworth parsonage or Yasnaya Polyana provides the setting.

Given genius; whereas he has a timid and small talent. If the extravert critic fancies himself as a judge, the introvert is an actor who finds satisfaction in stepping into the shoes of genius. That is his act of criticism, as the other's is in passing judgment.

* * *

Advice (this never costs anything).

To writers: write.

To readers: find your own pattern in literature and stick to it.

To critics: sneer and moan, but never invent an enthusiasm you haven't felt. Half the boredom of reading comes from readers trying to like what critics have pretended to admire.

G. W. STONIER

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

### "War and Peace," at the Phœnix

*War and Peace* at the Phœnix Theatre can barely be said to be based on the novel, beyond the fact that both this show and Tolstoy's book are about Napoleon's invasion of Russia. Most of the figures are called after Tolstoy's characters, but given even that clue they are hardly recognisable. An uninteresting girl called Natasha falls under the spell of a worthless seducer called Anatole Kuragin, although she is engaged to a man called Prince Andrey. Both she and Prince Andrey have a devoted friend in a big man called Pierre Bezukov. The programme tells us that "the hero of this play is the Russian people." It opens with a scene of an anti-aircraft battery in Moscow, 1941, and closes with another. Save for the drawing value of the title, the producers and designers need not have dragged in Tolstoy. They could have done what they aimed at as well, if not better, by confining themselves to "War" and leaving "Peace" out altogether. What they did aim at is something better done on the screen. Mr. Peter Illing as Napoleon succeeded in reminding us of Hitler.

### "Dr. Bolfry," at the Westminster Theatre

"I find the whole thing bloody boring," said one of the characters half-way through this new Bridie comedy. He was referring to a discussion between the two principals of the piece. Unfortunately, the play, which had rattled along gloriously until then, at once took a downward turn and did not look up again for the rest of the evening. An author should think twice before putting such prophetic words into the mouth of a character. The idea of bringing a Scottish Minister face to face with the Devil for a theological discussion is certainly refreshing. Two Gunners, a cheerful Cockney and a young philosopher, are billeted on a Minister in a Highland village. They agree with the Minister's modernistic niece that a chat with the Devil might do a lot of good to the strait-laced Clergyman, who even forbids a cup of tea on a Sunday afternoon. Up to this point Mr. Bridie's play was extremely amusing and witty. Alas, with the arrival of the Devil the author cluttered up the central theme with too much boring argumentation. Even in the capable hands of Mr. Raymond Lovell, Dr. Bolfry was oh! such a dull, dull Devil. Miss Sophie Stewart, as the Minister's wife, played one of those constantly-cheerful-come-what-may women with agonising brilliance. But the two performances that nearly saved the play were given by Mr. Alastair Sim and Mr. Harry Ross as the Minister and the Cockney, respectively. If the other characters were not so interesting it was due to the author and not to the players, all of whom were excellent. The settings by Michael Warre were tasteful and effective.

### "Misalliance," at Arts Theatre

*Misalliance*—"Hindhead before the war" (the last war)—goes all out for talk, without even a break for refreshments. Parents and children, big business and aristocracy, falling in love and getting married: these are the tunes to which the nine characters play dizzily at musical chairs. Do our energies as well as their's flag? Yes, there is a point in all Shaw plays when we realise he is getting nowhere and our spirits droop. Here it occurs with the vindication of a lady's honour—an incident tediously prolonged—and in the tight-roper's speech when the characters have to be called over and summed up for the last time. Farce (the aviators "dropping in to dinner," the vengeful clerk in the Turkish bath cabinet) has been called in; everyone has fallen in and out of love with everyone else. The process of witty and heartless exhaustion is brought to an end. *Misalliance* wears remarkably well; only a few of the jokes ("drainage" as a taboo subject) need renovating. The production at the Arts has speed, and the characters, rattled hither and thither in their author's fancy, improve as the evening goes on. Robert Marsden as the Business Man with Ideas, and Billy Shine as the aristocratic flirt from the Colonies make a good pair of endearing old sillies; Susan Richards gives us middle-class middle age with perhaps a trace too much sentiment; Harold Lang's Johnny is agreeably decadent in pose and sharp of wit. The triumph of the performance, though, was Peter Jones's black-coated Gunner; in turn melodramatic, whining and then tipsily defiant.

### "Hers to Hold," at the New Gallery

Only an unusually feeble little comedy to break the August drought. Unfortunately, the ten minutes of entertainment in *Hers to Hold* occur at the beginning; after that the film gets more and more tearful and thin. Deanna Durbin fans will find their idol in poor trim; those queenly strolls while she sings are particularly ineffective. Joseph Cotten fans will be shocked to find him here at all. Is he or isn't he—mysterious elusive flier—a widgeon? So Deanna asks. But really it isn't worth waiting to find out.

At the Leicester Square cinema Cavalcanti's *Yellow Caesar*, a satirical *collage* from newsreels of the bullfrog dictator, is being appropriately revived.

## GRAHAM BELL

Graham Bell has been killed in a flying accident. He was 32. He had been in the R.A.F. for more than three years, and had just finished his training in bombers. His death comes as an especial shock to his friends, for he possessed a vital charm which held together the rare glimpses they had of him in wartime. He was passionately interested; living, painting, aesthetics, Socialism were a few of the things he held to, and, when they needed advocacy, defended. He was a painter who wrote well. One picture in ten perhaps satisfied him; one pamphlet on the artist and society was the extent of his published work outside journalism. It is curious that while he wrote carelessly and with a dashing charm, his painting was achieved only as result of the most laborious and painful conflict. He was developing, as an artist, slowly; each step had to be measured and pondered before it was taken. He painted out of a full (almost too full) nature, though whether this would eventually have found total release one cannot tell. Occasionally a picture of his, in the subdued manner of the Euston Road Group, would strike the imagin tion forcibly: the lovely "Charlotte Street Snow," for example, belonging now to S Kenneth Clark. His large painting of a b showed an uncommon power of constructio but while his intellect decided the plan, the exec tion was always governed by sensibility and scr pulous observation. The routine and comrad ship of the R.A.F., though he found it at tim depressing, never crushed his enthusiasms, a when he came on a rare leave to London one of th first things he would do was to collect a new batc of National Gallery postcards to distribute amo companions who didn't know a Cézanne from Laszlo. Before the war he had been a regul contributor to this journal. The most characte istic thing in him was a kind of vehement vigo which informed his opinions, his talk, his habitu gaiety.

G. W. S.

# Correspondence

## COAL WITHOUT CONSCRIPTS

SIR,—I have read with great interest Mauric Edelman's article on "Coal without Conscripts published in your last issue. Although your contrib tor indulges in one or two flights of fancy with rega to the technical possibilities of improving conditio underground, he puts his finger on the core of th absentee problem in his first paragraph. "The men' got a grievance. It's the chief reason for absenteeis They think it serves us right for the years when th had to work short time."

The effects of a comparatively sudden release fro the coercion imposed by 15 years of economic depre sion are ignored by those who accuse the miner laziness or lack of patriotism. The reaction of th miner is natural and inevitable, although he probab does not clearly understand it himself and may ev feel a little ashamed when he does take a day in th sunshine. At the back of his mind there is alwa that thought that there is no guarantee, in spite of th Greene award and the guaranteed week, that the sa conditions will not recur as soon as the present natio emergency has passed; that state of living in dre of unemployment, of once more being reduced to th mere status of a cost of production, instead of bei a partner in a united effort as he is for the duratio the return of conditions which breed smoulderi resentment through fear of losing his job if he grumbl or complains. Sir Stafford Cripps, when he went India, found that years of accumulated mistrust a bad faith had left an indelible mark which could n be removed in a few weeks. There is a parallel in th mining industry.

Colliery managers will be grateful to Mauric Edelman for drawing attention to the dislocatio caused by absenteeism in the mining industry. all executive positions, a colliery manager's is probab the most responsible, onerous and irksome. He h to satisfy the management on output and costs; th Ministry of Fuel and Power on output and safety the men on working conditions. He has to comp with the Coal Mines Act, keep an eye on the pressu of the earth, which is always looking out for a we spot, deal with possible unforeseen emissions of g or rushes of water, cope with breakdowns a improvise when shortages of labour and materi increase his difficulties enormously. When the day work is done he must study the latest batch Statutory Rules and Orders, or see a deputation, attend a Pit Production Committee meeting, supervise the filling up of endless returns and repo required by the Ministry.

Small wonder that there is serious discussion the possibility of dividing the job and appointing labour manager to relieve the mining engineer of much office work. Recruitment of colliery manage is as difficult as recruitment of miners.

Maurice Edelman calls for boldness—"boldne hath genius, power and magic in it; only enga and then the mind grows heated." There numbers of agents, managers, engineers and scienti in the mining industry to-day who long for a resto tion of good faith between miner and manager, the re-establishment of the right personal relationshi in the industry. Concentration on the problem absenteeism and obsession with labour problems stultifies creative action and warps the outlook of so many in control of the industry. Fear of the future robs them of all initiative. The engineer and scientist become discouraged and impatient and suffer from a feeling of frustration.

The political future of the industry has been discussed on numerous occasions in the pages of your journal. Although the sooner it is tackled and settled, the better for the whole industry, it is apparently one of those controversial issues which must be left in cold storage until the war is over.

Here are, therefore, a few practical proposals which the Ministry of Fuel and Power should immediately tackle with boldness.

1. Implement the Forster Report and introduce a system of apprentice training which will embrace not only the pit boy but the increasingly important electrical and mechanical engineering apprentices (disparagingly referred to in that report as the "ancillary crafts") required in increasing numbers by the industry.

2. Prepare plans for the complete electrification and modernisation of surface plant at collieries. This modernisation would almost pay for itself in view of the savings to be obtained and would provide employment in the heavy engineering workshops throughout the country for several years after the war. (The Association of Mining, Electrical and Mechanical Engineers could advise on the setting up of advisory panels of engineers in each coalfield to prepare these plans.)

3. Investigate thoroughly and without bias the whole question of pithead generation of electricity, in order to use the residues from washeries and to save fuel transport costs, and consider the possibility of operating these stations in parallel with the grid. (The Ministry of Fuel and Power controls both electricity generation and coal production, and is therefore in a unique position to investigate this problem.)

4. Consider the location of coke oven plants and the erection of gas grids in industrial areas.

5. Analyse the industrial and domestic demand for different classes of fuel in this country and explore the possibility of extensive developments in the processing of coal and the establishment of coal by-product and chemical industries.

6. Stimulate research in the coal industry under three main headings :—

1. Utilisation of coal as a fuel.
2. Processing of coal and the manufacture of by-products.
3. The winning of coal underground.

Very little has been done under (3), but the day will come when the engineer will provide the tools to enable coal to be got without men having to work in the danger area—along the coal face.

We must husband our greatest national asset and forbid its export in a raw state. We must restore the right personal relationships and make men once again proud to work in what is now referred to as the "discredited industry." Without the engineer and the scientist the politician will never find a solution.

ENGINEER

## IN THE WITNESS BOX

SIR,—Mr. Potts's letter in your issue of July 24th is very nice, but it should be pointed out that the picture drawn by implication of the general state of education in the National Fire Service is, if not false, at least by no means general. In my own station it caused some rather bitter amusement.

Impressed by the success of A.B.C.A., the Ministry of Home Security has endeavoured to institute in the N.F.S. a rather more loosely-knit scheme for education and discussion, which falls within the field of any welfare officers that may be appointed. Well and good. Morale (which is directly connected with efficiency) is low, and it is the job of "welfare" to combat this. But between a benevolent Home Office at the top and the fireman at the bottom there are many obstacles, many petty dictators; in "welfare," as in every other sphere, there is the greatest diversity between region and region, fire force and fire force.

In London, for example, discussion group leaders are given every facility; London University, the British Museum reading room, the M.O.I., are at all times open to them for their education. In the region to which I am at present attached, on the other hand, "welfare" means a treat once a year for the children of the firemen living locally; the sole attempts at my station to institute discussions resulted in a hashed-up lecture on food values and a discussion on the news in the day's paper—with the proviso that anything connected with the war was out of order. It should be brought home to all officers that education is not only a long-term policy connected with the problems of peace, but a means to greater efficiency *now*.

But welfare is only one aspect of what is, I feel, an altogether larger issue. It would appear that too much power lies in the hands of the Regional Commissioners, the Chief Regional Fire Officers and the Fire Force Commanders, with the result that too many Home Office orders get lost in the wash. In every way, there are the most astonishing differences between the Fire Forces comprising the National Fire Service; the sooner these are ironed out, the sooner the N.F.S. will become the admirable organisation it already is on paper.

FIREMAN

## STATE MEDICAL SERVICE

SIR,—I am writing this letter because I feel that one of the most important developments in the life of this country is taking place at the moment. Because of the pressure of war news it is being nearly ignored and readers are not being given the chance to study the facts for themselves. I refer to the imminence of the Government White Paper on a State Medical Service which is to be published in about four weeks' time. This is to implement Assumption B of the Beveridge Report and establish a State Medical Service as soon as the European phase of the war ends. As such, it will automatically receive your support as it is a prominent point in the Socialist Party programme. I ask you to consider carefully whether this rapid adoption—I might almost say panic adoption—of State medicine is going to be in the best interests of the people as a whole and Socialism in particular.

My views are that:

1. State medicine is going to be inflicted on the community because it is the only part of the Beveridge Report which can be adopted without interfering with any of the interests of Capital.

2. It is going to be unpopular with the doctors who have to run the scheme and thus their influence, and they have considerable power in influencing public opinion, will be against further "experiments" in State control, and, if the scheme is a manifest failure, everyone adversely affected by it will be opposed to further experiments with State control. Thus, the Tories will be tremendously strengthened by popular opinion in opposing the nationalisation of the basic industries—coal, shipping, transport and land—with which they are so intimately associated, but the nationalisation of which is so much more important to the ordinary man-in-the-street than the nationalisation of medicine.

3. The urgency with which this is being rushed through is not, in my view, out of the Government's desire to help the people but to give the Government rigid control over medical certification in view of the increased sick benefits which will become payable under Beveridge. In the past the patient has employed the doctor, who has always given the benefit of the doubt to the patient. Under State medicine, the State will employ the doctor, who will then have to give the benefit of the doubt to the State, at the patient's expense.

I do not deny that the present medical service is far from ideal, but it must be remembered that the greater part of the profession has been partly under the State Health Insurance system for 21 years and most of the faults of to-day's system have been brought repeatedly to the notice of the Government by the doctors themselves, but in 21 years hardly any

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JONATHAN CAPE

advances have been made. The excuse has always been shortage of money and this applies especially to National Health Insurance benefits for insured persons' dependents. Now, for political expediency, a predominantly Tory Government is bringing in State medicine in a rush. I would ask you to consider carefully the reasons and to open your columns to articles and discussion before it is too late.

In conclusion, I would ask you to compare and contrast the rate at which the Government is dealing with the Uthwatt Report with the rate at which it proposes to deal with the medical aspects of Beveridge, and to ask yourselves whether this is being done in the interests of the people or of the Tories, and whether the medical services of the country or the coal industry stand in the greater need of re-organisation. A State medical service is obviously part of a Socialist State, but at this moment, have we advanced sufficiently far to allow it to be introduced in face of the above?

NORTHUMBERLAND PRACTITIONER

## PREVENTION OF VENEREAL DISEASE

SIR,—A small but important Society is requiring help in order to maintain its work; your readers may possibly be interested.

The National Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease exists for two purposes: (1) to educate the public in regard to the scientific *prevention* of venereal disease; and (2) to amend the law which at present makes it illegal for chemists to supply approved preventive measures. The public is not generally aware of the fact that a very high degree of protection against infection can be achieved by personal disinfection; in fact, the "prophylaxis" of venereal disease is one of the most successful measures of all preventive medicine.

It is curious that whereas the medical personnel in the services are encouraged to give this instruction to men who risk infection, the official Government policy is to prevent this knowledge reaching the civilian population. This high-handed obscurantism is by no means welcomed by informed civilians.

This small Society finds that there is an immense demand for its literature, and thousands of instructional cards have been supplied by request, to civilians and to local authorities for distribution. The public, surely, should have the right to this knowledge. Unfortunately, our funds are so low that the work is now cramped, and we need financial help immediately. Literature, if requested, will be sent in return for donations, however small, addressed to the Treasurer, N.S.P.V.D., 47 Nottingham Place, W.1.

ALVA BENJAMIN,
Hon. Treasurer

## BOMBING OF ROME

SIR,—I have read with growing weariness the controversy over the bombing of Rome. The issue is so clear to me and, I think, to others who might have to take part in such a bombing, that I cannot understand THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION devoting so much space to the subject.

The point surely is that those who would spare Rome are trying to buy their pleasures at the cost of other people's lives. Are they prepared to state categorically that they would rather a British soldier was killed in Sicily than that St. Peter's was exposed to the risk of damage? Michelangelo's art may be irreplaceable, but so is the soldier: his mother and his wife would miss him more than they would miss the Basilica of San Lorenzo: and the world is made up of irreplaceable soldiers with wives and mothers. Nor can it be denied that the soldier's unborn son might outshine Michelangelo.

Perhaps in a new world we shall all be so cultured that we shall prefer a monument to a life, but that is not the ideal for which most of us are fighting.

I have, of course, assumed that there is no longer any question about the military necessity of bombing Rome. Our leaders in that theatre of war have shown enough professional competence in selecting bombing targets to be trusted when they say that attacks on Rome will speed our success.

"A COASTAL COMMAND PILOT"

## A VOICE FROM THE PAST

SIR,—I have just read these unexpected words in your issue of July 31st:

> "Little men from Birmingham and Bideford have been loud with delight at the bombing of Rome, but I seem to hear the formidable protests of a whole legion of English ghosts."

Some of your readers may be interested in the following protest of an "English ghost" whose living voice has not been heard by mortal ears since 1909. They occur in a letter to my father, William Michael Rossetti, and were written on the 1st June 1871, when it was rumoured that the *Communards* (with whom this detestor of Napoleon III had much sympathy) had attempted to destroy the Louvre.

". . For the rest," he writes, "I may say as frankly to you as I would say to Hugo that so far from objecting to the infliction of death on the incendiaries of the Louvre I should wish to have them proclaimed (to use a phrase of his own) not merely '*hors la loi*,' but '*hors l'humanité*,' and a law passed throughout the world authorising any citizen of any nation to take their lives with impunity and assurance of national thanks—to shoot them down wherever met like dogs. A political crime is a national crime and punishable only by the nation sinned against; France alone has the right to punish the shedding of French blood by putting to death, on that charge, a Bonaparte or a Thiers, a Rigault or a Gallifet: but it is the whole world's right and duty to take vengeance on men who should strike at the whole world such a blow as to inflict an everlasting incurable wound by the attempted destruction of Rome, Venice, Paris, London—of the Vatican, Ducal Palace, Louvre, or Museum. A. C. Swinburne"

There are moments when only the voices of the dead—and of posterity—give sound counsel or any comfort.

MARY E. MADOX ROSSETTI

## WEST AFRICA

SIR,—"The English have adopted, *as a method of keeping us apart*, the teaching of local languages." This reply of Councillor Awoonor-Renner quoted under "What West Africans Want" in your issue of August 7th, reminds me of the point once put by a highly educated African gentleman who suggested to me that if he could believe all that History and Economics had taught him at Cambridge our land tenure policy in West Africa, though imposed ostensibly to safeguard the interests of the peoples, would in effect—and, he hinted, in our own interests—inhibit their economic and social development; and of the sarcasm of an enterprising and intelligent African business man who, speaking some years after the last war, thought it strange that so military a nation should in West Africa rely solely on African regiments. In each case it was our good faith, our honesty of intention, that was impugned.

Mr. Awoonor-Renner's argument that European and African government officers in the same grade should receive the *same* pay has considerable support in certain circles here. But surely there are obvious reasons for some differentiation; and in their present stage of development would it not be in the best interests of African governments and peoples to secure the best aid available? The more efficient that aid the sooner will these Colonies stand on their own feet, politically, economically and industrially, and the sooner will they be able to afford the better conditions and the social services so urgently required and demanded. We do not doubt our honesty of intention, but it does seem that it needs expounding.

C. L. COX

Shieling, Merstham.

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# BOOKS IN GENERAL

JUST before the war I was taken to see Mme Alphonse Daudet, the widow of the novelist. *Tartarin de Tarascon* and the *Lettres de mon moulin* are, one hopes, still read by young persons, but his great novels are unwisely neglected, *Le nabab* and *Numa Roumestan* and that strange story, *L'évangeliste*, which I think may have given Henry James the theme of *The Bostonians*. Mme Daudet, who must have been nearly ninety had surprising hair, the colour of marigolds; and she pointed to a portrait, hung near the ceiling, of a magnificently beautiful young woman with raven locks: "Voilà," she told me, "mon portrait par Renoir." Soon I was able to lead the talk towards her friends in the distant past. She had been married in 1867, and I like trivial details about the illustrious dead. Edmond de Goncourt—a *fin gourmet*, she said, and Flaubert—"Il mangeait énormément." When I mentioned Turgenev, there was a sudden, sharp flash of indignation; "Tourguénieff était *perfide!*" she croaked, and I remembered a silly gossipy book published after his death, which attributed to him probably without any truth, disobliging remarks about his French friends.

I do not believe that Turgenev was perfidious. He became Flaubert's closest friend, and there are many stories of his kindness. He would take endless trouble to help any Russian in need of money or work or encouragement. His tales (and his agonised description of Tropmann's execution) reveal an extraordinary tenderness of heart. But he was cruelly attacked in the press alike by the revolutionaries and by the conservatives. To begin with, he preferred to live abroad—and this to the 19th century Russians, who were only just emerging from barbarism, was a shocking crime. To-day American critics often use the word "expatriate" as a term of abuse—which is all the odder, because they are themselves all descended from comparatively recent expatriates. Usually they seek to disguise the vulgarity of this prejudice by pretending that expatriation damages an artist's powers. Thomas Aquinas, El Greco, Poussin, Claude, Gluck, Handel, Landor, Byron, Shelley, Browning, Ibsen, Picasso, these are only a dozen names that occur to me of men whose best work was done in countries not their own. And if one may mention the fact without offence, the best painter and the best novelist and the best modern poet that the United States have yet produced, all chose to live in Europe.

It was love that made Turgenev an expatriate. His life was governed by two women: his mother, a capricious tyrant whose cruelties instilled in him a lifelong passion for freedom; and Pauline Viardot, whom he first met at Petersburg when he was twenty-two. Probably the greatest operatic singer of her time, she was married, ugly and highly intelligent. Turgenev followed her to Paris in 1847 and lived with or near the Viardots in France and Germany till his death in 1883, except for a year and a half, during which he was exiled by the Tsar to his country estate. He also made frequent visits to England, to Ventnor for the bathing, and to Six Mile Bottom for the shooting. Almost every year he went back to his wooden house near Orel—it was painted lilac, and ivy clambered over the verandah. Comprehensibly he preferred to the local squireens such friends as Flaubert, George Sand, Mérimée, Goncourt, Renan, Zola, Maupassant and the Daudets. And here let me say that far the best book in English on Turgenev is by Avrahm Yarmolinski (now unluckily out of print). That other biographers should have attempted to write his life without a knowledge of Russian is a sad instance of wasted energy.

Turgenev not only preferred living abroad, he believed that the future of Russia depended upon assimilation to Western Europe. To mystical Slavophiles this was a hideous heresy; and Dostoevski, who like many men of genius was extremely unamiable, attacked him with particular violence. But then to Dostoevski Western Europe was above all a place where he could indulge his passion for roulette. One must add that on one occasion when he had lost all his money at Baden, he borrowed money from Turgenev, which he never repaid; and Dostoevski, like Rousseau, was not the man lightly to forgive a benefactor. The conflict between the Slavophiles and the Westernisers is still unsettled. To-day the U.S.S.R. have raised a mighty edifice upon economic theories and industrial techniques alike taken from the West. Yet never since Peter the Great have the Russians been so secluded as they were between the wars from the currents of contemporary European thought and art. We were allowed to enter Russia, but no Russian except a few officials was allowed to leave it, and come to the West. All of us who hope for good relations with the U.S.S.R. must look forward to the reversal of this obscurantist policy. Freedom to travel is not the least important of the freedoms, and it will be a privilege to welcome here visitors from that Russia to which we owe so much.

It is arguable that expatriation did have one bad effect upon Turgenev as a writer. Wisely he wrote almost always about his own compatriots; those he frequented were for the most part politically minded exiles; and therefore in his novels he was concerned—too exclusively, one may think—with the current types of reformer and revolutionary. But even if he had remained in Russia, he could hardly, as an intelligent man, have escaped preoccupation with politics—so gross and incompetent was the Tsarist despotism. Turgenev saw the necessity of radical changes, but he thought that revolution by violence was neither desirable nor possible. (And in his time this in fact was not possible.) In 1875 he made the following declaration:

> I am, above all, a realist, and chiefly interested in the living truth of the human face; to everything supernatural I am indifferent, and I don't believe in absolutes or systems; I love freedom better than anything, and so far as I can judge I am sensitive to poetry. Everything human is dear to me, Slavophilism is alien, and so is all manner of orthodoxy.

He was, in fact, a liberal; or, if you prefer it, he lacked faith; and consequently he found himself detested by the zealots of both the opposing camps.

*A Sportsman's Sketches* were written between 1847 and 1851. His first novel, *Rudin*, appeared in 1855. Like *A Month in the Country* it is the story of the ripple made by an intruder in the tranquillity of country-house life. But in the novel interest is focussed on the intruder, eloquent but ineffective, the first of several Hamlet-like characters, in whom Turgenev diagnosed a national malady. ("A typically Russian nature," he says in one of his other books, "truthful, honest, simple; but unhappily without energy, lacking tenacity and inward fire.") Three years later came *A House of Gentlefolk*, a beautiful tale of lovers kept apart by circumstances, the best, I think, of his novels except *Fathers and Children*. In the same year appeared *On the Eve*, in which for the first time Turgenev concentrated upon what was to be his principal theme—the effect of the revolutionary spirit upon various types of Russian. This is, moreover, the first of his books to end in unrelieved tragedy. It is punctuated with such remarks as "Every man's happiness is built on the unhappiness of another" and "Each of us is guilty by the fact that he lives." He had by this time met so many Russian rebels of the futile type described by his friend Herzen, that he made his resolute hero a Bulgarian. The lethargic, inarticulate figure of Uvar Ivanovitch, however, seems to typify the unawakened power of Russia; and Turgenev's admiration for Russian women never failed: Marianna in the last novel he wrote is as splendid as Elena in *On the Eve*. *Fathers and Children* was published in 1862. The hero, Bazarov, is an intellectual, coldly critical and in his conduct usually inhuman. A "nihilist" Turgenev calls him, and the term (which he had found in some French philosopher) henceforward was applied by their enemies to all Russian revolutionaries. Bazarov, the democrat who despises the common people, who disregards human personality, who cares nothing for the beauties of Nature or of Art, who values nothing but science (and that only in its practical applications), Bazarov anticipates remarkably the steely type of devotee that has made Russia first Communist and then powerful. But to the idealist revolutionaries of the Sixties Bazarov seemed a calumnious caricature. In vain Turgenev protested "except for his views on art, I share almost all Bazarov's convictions." Henceforward the writer who had contributed so signally to the emancipation of the serfs was labelled an enemy of progress. He had even to endure the congratulations of the reactionaries he abhorred.

The bitterness excited by this misunderstanding disfigures his next novel, *Smoke*. The scene is Baden, where Turgenev was living with the Viardots; the theme is the conflict between a gentle love and an infatuation, a theme even better handled four years later in a masterpiece called *Torrents of Spring*. But too much of the book is taken up by portraits of frivolous aristocrats and of silly chattering revolutionaries. The last and longest of Turgenev's novels, *Virgin Soil*, which appeared in 1877, is also, I think, the least valuable. Not that it is ever dull—the reader is always sustained by the author's intelligence and craftsmanship, but the book seems the product no longer of genius but of consummate talent. Turgenev was doubtless right in elevating the noble Marianna and the industrious Solomin at the expense of the ineffective Nezhdanov but for the first time in his work we feel we are reading a *roman à thèse*.

Precious as these novels are to the student of the nineteenth century revolutionary, one is thankful that their author continued to write short stories. *Acia* (1857), *First Love* (1860), *The Brigadier* (1867), *A Lear of the Steppes* (1870), and *Torrents of Spring* (1871) are at least equal to *A Sportsman's Sketches*, and place Turgenev among the greatest writers of his century. I would say indeed that he was a supreme writer of short stories, who wrote also one delightful novel, *A House of Gentlefolk*, and one great novel, *Fathers and Children*. The extent of his originality is easily overlooked. Not only did he envelope his fictions in the sights and sounds and scents of Nature, but he persistently substituted complication of character for complication of plot. Indeed, he was so sparing with vicissitudes that his novels seem to be not so much novels as short stories told at length. He had no interest in incident except in so far as it revealed character; he was not concerned to excite suspense. He constructed his scenes like a painter rather than a dramatist. In the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* Henry James recounts one of his talks with Turgenev, whom he venerated as the finest of contemporary craftsmen. Turgenev said to him: "I'm often accused of not having 'story' enough. I seem to myself to have as much as I need, to show my people, to exhibit their relations with each other; for that is my measure." This economy may disappoint the dull reader, but I consider it a merit rather than a failing.

Controversy no longer obscures the fact that *Fathers and Children* is a masterpiece. Arkady's father and uncle, Bazarov's parents, and Mme Odintsov are set before us with a realism all the shrewder because it springs from a wealth of sympathy. The relationships between them are realised completely. I know of nothing in prose more acutely moving than the account of the young men's visit to Bazarov's adoring, uncomprehending parents. Most great novelists make their characters more than life-size—this indeed is a part of their greatness—but Turgenev always keeps to human scale, and I suspect it is this which makes his pathos so irresistible. He has a singular genius also for the significant detail; and whereas earlier novelists defined their figures with sharp strokes, Turgenev artfully blurs the contours to achieve a heightened realism. Similarly the loose handling of a Manet produces a more life-like effect than the precise draughtsmanship of an Ingres. And yet one must insist that realism is not an end in itself, it is only a method. Keats's identification of beauty with truth, quite misleading as a generalisation, applies exactly to Turgenev. His writings leave one impressed above all with a sense of the beauty that he had the penetration to discover in the obscurity of man's heart no less than in the lively forest and on the nocturnal plain.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

## THE LESSONS OF WAR

**Weapons and Tactics.** By TOM WINTRINGHAM. *Faber & Faber.* 10s. 6d.

**Amphibious Warfare and Combined Operations.** By LORD KEYES. *Cambridge University Press.* 4s. 6d.

Since the days when Oscar Browning held that our future statesmen should be conducted through the historical tripos, the muse of history has frequently been decked out in the toilette of a schoolmarm. But the lessons of history are hard to apply, and we, the pupils, obtuse. Let us try once more to sit at her feet and ponder while she speaks through the powerful organs of Mr. Wintringham and Lord Keyes.

First through Mr. Wintringham. His book is a short history of the relation between tactics, the technical improvements in weapons and the indefinable spirit of the troops engaged. They each react upon the other. We see how, for instance, the weapons and ill-discipline of the Persian hordes precluded their ever imitating the tactics of the Greeks. He divides the history of war into armoured and unarmoured periods, and argues that we have just entered a new armoured period, the last having ended with the Battle of Crecy, when armour became too ponderous for manœuvre, and projectiles too accurate and strong. A student of the Omān who played *Kriegspiel* with Cook Wilson in the eighties, Mr. Wintringham writes his history of war with verve and clarity. The narrative flows glistening, discursive and always within the banks of the argument. It is most readable, full of stimulating technical facts about weapons, organisation and battle procedure. It is interesting to learn that between the defeat of Cannae and the victories of Scipio Africanus, the Romans produced a new mark in swords: the tougher, sharper Spanish blade which endured for years of fighting. Occasionally he is inaccurate on questions of fact—aircraft are not an integral part of a panzer division. Nor is it true that the Germans talk *en clair* over the radio while the British stick to coding and decoding messages. While the main contention of his chapters on the trend of modern tactics is sound, the details of his argument are highly controversial. One will agree with his sensible dicta on self-propelled artillery and the fighter-bomber; one may disagree that the anti-tank gun pure and simple is obsolescent, that the 25-pounder is a weapon for the last war and not for this, and that all artillery should be triple-purpose, at once field, anti-tank and A.A. In discussing the technical advances which restored mobility to warfare, he does not, I think, sufficiently stress the importance of radio which has enabled formation commanders to fight the battle and regain in this war the control of their units which they had lost in the last war. And then there is . . . and before one knows it one is well away, drawing maps, inserting pins—the dividers and Vee Tee meter to hand. We are reading the book of an enthusiast.

Lord Keyes is an oracle on combined operations. He is, however, mainly content to limit the scope of his inquiries to history as he has experienced it, since four out of five of his lectures are autobiographical. It is natural that one should turn to his last lecture on combined operations in this war in which he ascribes our failures in Norway and, in his view, our wasted opportunities in 1941–2, first, to our pre-war unpreparedness (to which Mr. Wintringham surprisingly enough does not refer), and secondly, to the malignant influence of the inter-service committees and the all-powerful chiefs of staff. Thwacking the marble index of the Whitehall mind is a hallowed pastime. Some of his criticisms may be true, others not. But certainly no ordinary member of the public can possibly contradict him till the minutes, the facts and figures of production are published. The military historian may then decide, as Lord Keyes suggests, that in 1941–2 we should have followed the policy of the elder Pitt in making continual raids to keep the enemy guessing; or he may agree with Chatham's critics that such a policy would have been breaking windows with golden guineas.

It must have been galling for so distinguished and gallant a commander to feel that his plans were hamstrung by the Whitehall committees, but let us imagine how the committees may have regarded the matter. We were at that time threatened with invasion, and German aircraft were being based on the Mediterranean islands. Our production was devoted to producing defensive weapons, and our offensive equipment was being despatched to the Middle East. We were without an ally, and when Russia entered the war, another commitment was added to our production; and even then the strain on the Navy was unrelieved. We were also losing a number of heavy naval units, including aircraft carriers. Nor was Lord Keyes fortunate enough to command, as in 1918, a large force of obsolescent naval units and small craft, nor could he get production switched to meet his needs as when the whole production of saccharine was stopped until he had enough smoke-discharging apparatus for the Zeebrugge operation. The military historian must ask whether the *technical* equipment was available in those days.

And if it was, could we afford the losses? Committees are by nature over-cautious, and Lord Keyes feels that they were over-fearful of air attack. He may be right. And yet the one lesson of Crete, Malaya and later the defeats suffered by the Japanese in the S.W. Pacific which was constantly borne in on the committees was that shipping sailing in narrow waters where the enemy has air superiority court disaster. Decision by committees—how we all dislike it; and yet—does not Lord Keyes admit it?—how unavoidable. They test the nuts and bolts of plans. There is only one alternative: Hitler's solution. For Hitler is able to plan operations and order them to be carried out regardless of advice. We are indeed fortunate that it should be so. Thanks to his incompetent generalship, his under-estimate of Russian strength, his dismissal of protesting generals, misfortune has descended on the Wehrmacht. It is a warning to us all never to draw pincer movements on an unresisting map.

NOEL ANNAN

## UTILITY DETECTION AND THRILLERS

**The Moving Finger.** By AGATHA CHRISTIE. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.

**Wolf in Man's Clothing.** By M. G. EBERHART. *Collins.* 8s. 6d.

**The Emperor's Snuff-Box.** By JOHN DICKSON CARR. *Hamish Hamilton.* 8s.

**The So Blue Marble.** By DOROTHY B. HUGHES. *Nicholson and Watson.* 7s. 6d.

**Reply Paid.** By GERALD HEARD. *Cassell.* 8s. 6d.

**Murder Chop Chop.** By JAMES NORMAN. *Michael Joseph.* 8s. 6d.

**Hero by Proxy.** By DARWIN TEILHET. *Gollancz.* 8s. 6d.

**It Began in New York.** By MILWARD KENNEDY. *Gollancz.* 8s. 6d.

Detection up to pre-war strength is nowadays no easier to find than razor-blades. This year so far there has been nothing first-rate to record; and in the present list, dilution, substitution "and other ingredients" are sadly visible under the old trade-marks, while the two newcomers are only included as the best of a lot of inferior stuff, whose very names I had better suppress.

Only the first three on the list rank as detection. Miss Marple is Mrs. Christie's second-string detective; and her appearance in a case is a sure index that it has not been judged worthy of Poirot. *The Moving Finger* hardly taxes even Miss Marple's powers: she just pops in at the end of the book to dust round and tidy up. The story is the familiar one of a poison-pen in a small country town; but when it is told through the mouth of a simple-minded Air Force officer, we realise that Mrs. Christie is up to one of her favourite tricks. The twist she puts into the *dénouement* behind the back of her simple airman is as neat as you could wish; but the material for mystification is so slight that a couple of love-interests are needed to fill out 160 pages—and love is not Mrs. Christie's *forte*. I was intrigued to find my own name suspiciously last on the list of suspects, but I gave myself the benefit of the doubt. Was I right?

After a diluted Christie there can be nothing shocking in an Eberhart with some of those "other ingredients" to which I have such a squeamish aversion. Not that Mrs. Eberhart fails to blend this alien matter most skilfully with her stock-in-trade of feminine alarm in awkward predicaments. In *Wolf in Man's Clothing* the heroine has plenty to shriek about—if only she dared shriek! Her ex-husband is shot and won't say who did it. Her greatest enemy dies on her hands, just after she's given him a hypodermic for his good. Bullets whistle overhead in the dusk; and eventually she gets cooped up for a day with a crazy woman brandishing a kitchen knife. As you see a genuine Eberhart sequence; with plenty of excitement, a sound plot, a rather obvious solution, and old Nurse Keate from *The Patient in Room* 18 describing the proceedings with her usual bluff sentimentality.

Mr. Dickson Carr has borrowed the setting for his plot from an historical episode of Victorian times. Lord William Russell, while keeping a clandestine appointment with a married woman in her bedroom, observed a murder being committed in a room across the street; and was faced with an unenviable dilemma of conscience. To keep mum and save his mistress's honour, or identify the murderer and save an innocent man's life. Mr. Carr is not interested in the moral problem, but in the challenge such a situation offers to his fertile imagination. His reply to the challenge, *The Emperor's Snuff-Box* is a masterpiece of ingenuity—one of those tricky murders which the criminal could never hope to bring off without an author like Mr. Carr to prompt him at every turn. But why have we got to have Dr. Kinross doing *locum* for Dr. Gideon Fell? A total stranger, unprepossessing and soft-hearted, only fit for the fate Mr. Carr prescribes for him—to spend many futile pages falling in love.

The only merit about *The So Blue Marble* is the faint thrill of excitement. (Why do thrillers do everything but thrill?) The plot is fantastic. A couple of immaculate twins go hunting round New York for a blue marble that contains the secret of the universe. The style is naïve, but must be effective, as I don't deny the book is positively readable—I have read it.

Mr. Bowcross, the superman of *A Taste for Honey*, reappears in *Reply Paid* in search of radio-activity among the spiritualists of Arizona. I really can't say what Mr. Heard is driving at in his blend of science and mysticism, dished up as a thriller. His advent among the lowbrows is like that of a city magnate in spats deliberately travelling third, making everyone uneasy in the same compartment for no earthly reason. The mystery about *Reply Paid* is why it is called "a mystery": it is a mild adventure story in the deserts of Arizona, occasionally trespassing into the *au delà*.

The last three are war thrillers of the more intelligent type, where the reader is kept guessing about the identity of one villain at least till the last chapter. In *Murder Chop Chop* the setting is China among the *guerrilleros*, a very fancy picture of international hugger-mugger, with a Mexican bandit, a Scotch doctor, an American cowboy, a British ambassador and any number of indigenous Chinese, larded with copious extracts from the author's Chinese and Spanish vocabulary. Hardly as amusing as Mr. Norman hopes it is, but worth reading as a competent exotic.

The scene of *Hero by Proxy* is Central America, gorgeous with local technicolour. An American business man of quiet habits finds himself involved, by mistake for his brother, in a budding revolution promoted by Axis agents. Mr. Teilhet has a sprightly narrative style and with no respect for his hero's muscular endurance never flinches from direct action. *Hero by Proxy* is quick and exciting, and the best reading of the thrillers on this list.

By comparison Mr. Milward Kennedy is disappointing. The British business-man hero of *It Began in New York* has just as much physical activity required of him as Mr. Teilhet's American counterpart, in just as improbable conditions; but the pace is too languid, too many characters flit on and off, and the creaking of the melodramatic machinery is plainly audible. There is a pleasant jolt of surprise at the end, if you've been nodding, such as one would expect from a writer of Mr. Kennedy's standing. But there are some things, however well ended, which were better never begun—even in New York.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

## WAR IN BURMA

**Red Moon Rising.** By GEORGE RODGER. *Cresset Press.* 12s. 6d.

**A Million Died!** By ALFRED WAGG. *Nicholson & Watson.* 7s. 6d.

Very little worth-while news has come out of Burma since the Japanese occupation, and even about the campaign itself extraordinarily little has been published. The competent authorities have simply kept their mouths shut (rumour has it that even Mr. Wagg's book, which is notably pro-British, was published only against official opposition), and no newspaper correspondent with a background knowledge of Burma seems to have been present during the crucial period. The result has been a crop of rumours and a widespread misconception of the reasons for which Burma was lost. It is because they help to put the Burma campaign in perspective, and because they agree with the meagre verbal information that is obtainable, that these two books are worth reading.

It cannot be said that they are good books. Both are by Americans, and though Mr. Wagg is more recognisably the tough guy reporter, both have the characteristics we have learned to expect in the books that roving correspondents throw off between journeys. Mr. Rodger is more inclined to misspell names and mistranslate phrases, but makes up for it by having better photographs (incidentally anyone who cares for photography should have a look at the picture of Indian refugees opposite page 55), while Mr. Wagg shows more awareness of Burma's political and economic development, and of the sources of Burmese nationalism. Between them they add to our knowledge on two very important subjects—the extent of the Burmese fifth column, and the attitude of the Burmese towards the Indians.

There is, of course, very little question as to why Burma was lost. More numerous, better armed, greatly superior in the air, the Japanese were bound to win, and the British and Indian troops achieved a great deal in getting out of the country as an organised force. The idea prevalent at the time, that it would somehow have been different if Burma had been promised independence, was a sentimentality. The Burmese could not have resisted the Japanese even if they had wished to. But the Japanese had grasped one fact which the British had ignored, and are still ignoring in India, namely, that an unarmed peasant who is little use as a regular soldier can do a lot of damage as a guerilla or saboteur. Long before the war they had made contact with the Thakin party (the extreme nationalists), and as soon as fighting broke out they formed the Burma Independence Army, which was used for creating diversions, cutting communications, and supplying guides and interpreters. The Thakin party overlapped with the dacoits, from whose ranks several of the leading Burmese politicians had graduated, and the Burma Independence Army probably started off with a good supply of stolen weapons, mostly shotguns. The Japanese do not seem to have taken the risk of distributing modern arms in large quantities, and it is known that the partisans suffered heavy casualties. This presumably did not distress the Japanese, who would have their own troubles with the Nationalists to settle later. It is impossible to get from either Mr. Wagg's or Mr. Rodger's book any definite idea of the number of Burmese who were actively anti-British, but both give the impression that it was a large number, perhaps scores or even hundreds of thousands. This somewhat contradicts other accounts of the campaign, which suggest that not more than ten thousand Burmese actually fought on the Japanese side. All accounts that have appeared agree that the mass of the population were indifferent or merely frightened, fleeing into the jungle when the bombers came but not intervening on either side. Only the wild tribes of the far north were reliably pro-British.

Both Mr. Wagg and Mr. Rodger have much to say about the exodus of the Indians, an appalling tragedy of which too little has been heard in this country. Between a hundred and two hundred thousand Indians, something over a third of the Indian population of the country, fled from Burma when the Japanese came, thousands perishing of hunger in the mountains between Burma and Assam, or at the hands of dacoits. For years past anti-Indian feeling had been rampant, not unjustifiably, because in many parts of Lower Burma the Indian moneylenders were gradually eating up the peasants. However, the long columns who set out on the thousand-mile march to India, unarmed and almost without food, were composed not of moneylenders but of wretched Dravidian coolies whose chief crime was their willingness to work for low wages. All the way they were robbed and murdered by gangs of dacoits and systematically overcharged by the villagers. Mr. Rodger gives a revealing little description of a mixed gang of criminals and policemen setting up a road-block and charging a toll from every refugee who passed. The Forest Department, the Assam tea-planters and various missionary organisations set up rest camps and distributed such food as they could lay hands on, but many of the refugees were caught by the monsoon and isolated in places where they were bound to starve to death. At the time it was widely rumoured that the Europeans had saved their own skins and left the Indians to their fate. Allowing for the fact that the person with money is the person who gets a seat in an aeroplane, this charge does not seem to have been true, and probably it was merely a by-product of the agitation against the Cripps mission. It would, of course, have been quite impossible to evacuate all the Indians in Burma by air. Altogether less than ten thousand people escaped by air, and many Europeans left Burma on foot: on the other hand some fifty thousand Indians were successfully repatriated by the British and Indian navies.

Both of these books give valuable eye-witness accounts of the effects of bombing on a helpless and uninterested population. Rangoon was almost emptied of inhabitants by a week or so of bombing which by our standards would hardly have seemed like bombing at all. There does not seem to have been much panic; the people saw that they could do nothing, and walked out. Most of the towns and villages of Burma are built of wood, and as this was the dry season the

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most terrible devastation was caused by fire bombs, Mandalay and other towns in Upper Burma being reduced to mere piles of ashes. This kind of thing is going to happen all over South Asia when the war gets into its stride at that end of the world. Meanwhile, Burma is under Japanese rule, and of its real condition we know next to nothing. Whoever is interested in this subject should look out for a little-known book, *What Happened in Burma*, shortly to be published here, which begins where Mr. Wagg and Mr. Rodger leave off, and on the whole bears out what they say.

GEORGE ORWELL

## EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

**Blueprint for a Common School.** By W. KENNETH RICHMOND. *Routledge.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

In *The Common School* Mr. Richmond gathers together the knowledge which research and experiment in the last decades have given us about the nature of childhood, and on the basis of it provides a sketch for the conduct of an up-to-date Junior school. Lately educational opinion has been concentrating on the physical reforms our system needs. And rightly; for when we seemed both to know so little and to be on the edge of knowing so much more about the child, it has seemed wiser to press for those reforms—the buildings, the leaving age, the provision of teachers, the problems of administration—where disagreement is largely political. It is easier to persuade the dunderheads that an extension of education will pay than to convince them that the methods that were good enough for our fathers are not good enough for us.

The pressure has had its effect—what effect exactly we shall presently know; and it may be time now to switch the attack and concentrate for a little on the content of the education which the newly constituted schools are to provide. After the war a very large number of new teachers will have to be trained, and it is of central importance that they should be trained to work in accordance with the knowledge about children which we now possess; thus they may become real educators, not mere routineers or examination machines. And a great deal more is known now than seems to be commonly supposed. If we still know too little to be dogmatic, we do know enough to be less instinctive and more intelligent in our handling of the young.

Mr. Richmond confines himself to the Junior school, the age group 7 to 11. At this stage the human creature is leaving behind the egocentricity of infancy where its emotional drives are still centred in itself and its parents; its interests are turning towards the world outside itself and curiosity bustles into activity. This period has been termed the period of latency—a kind of lull, emotionally, between the desires and phantasies of the baby and the storms and stresses of the adolescent. The intuition of the ages has recognised this and in this period the process of stuffing the little mind and stretching the little memory has traditionally begun.

But even the most conservative-minded of teachers must often have sadly compared the interest and excitement of the children's pursuit of their own activities—collecting, bird's nesting, gang games—with the discomfort and boredom with which the same children sat at the school desks, even when those teachers flattered themselves that they were being at their most interesting. And they must have wished that they had the skill to direct that voluntary excitement and interest to their own sphere. How just something of that kind can be done the research of experimenters and psychologists has been designed to find out. How it can not be done the traditional methods ably demonstrate. They have concentrated on the child's intellect, and if interest did not materialise have resorted to adult sanctions. This won't do. The sources of vitality in a child are the instincts; the first business of the teacher is to understand them and to give them free room to develop. In this sense of absence of external regulation the young child must have freedom, freedom to pursue its own activities at its own time and pace. This will not in practice mean "allowing them to do what they like." For the child's instinctive drives lack two adult qualities (or, shall we say, qualities sometimes found in adults) persistence and direction. It is for the teacher to supply them as far as, and in the degree, they are necessary. But it cannot be done by forcing. Even the abortive Consultative Committee's report of 1931 admitted the negatives: not formal instruction; not sitting still on benches; not, above all, the first emphasis on the intellect.

What then? Here Mr. Richmond is necessarily but unfortunately somewhat vague. The Activity school, as he calls it, is hinted at rather than defined; the way has largely to be discovered in practice. By old standards Mr. Richmond's suggestions will seem revolutionary; in fact they indicate the road along which educational opinion has for some time been moving, and along which it will continue to move. The present gives us a great opportunity for a real step forward. The return to peace is bound to entail a good deal of improvisation in education as in everything else; it will be an excellent time for experiment. But in one direction improvisation should be avoided. The training of the new batch of teachers who will return from the war should be devised in advance so that when they do start, they can be equipped with real knowledge about education and not a lot of mumbo jumbo. Mr. Richmond's essay would be useful for that purpose.

T. C. WORSLEY

## PARIS THEN AND NOW

**Paris d'Hier et Aujourd, hui.** Text by ANDRÉ SIDOBRE. *Hachette.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

This is the first of a series of photographic albums depicting the past and present of France. By the highest standards of pre-war photography *Paris d'Hier et Aujourd, hui* is perhaps not especially striking, but its evocative power makes such standards at the moment secondary. Here again, then, is the much-photographed town, which we remember from a week-end or a lifetime of visiting, in its streets, cafés, kiosks, statuary and gardens. The Eiffel Tower stretches up in the dusk over a lamplit Seine. Sunlight emphasises the moulding of figures on the balconies of the Louvre. Peasants and tramps sprawl on the street benches. An artist sets up his easel opposite a crazy corner where even the windows under the lettering " Coiffeur " lean to the left. Sunlight in Montmartre. The Arc de Triomphe floodlit. A tug approaching the Ile de la Cité. Bookstalls along the quay, with Notre Dame in the distance. River gods and goddesses arched sportively in a stone basin. The familiar intoxication is revived by even the most casually caught glimpse. And there are here, among many agreeable pages, a half-dozen or so splendid photographs. The six contributions by Bressai, especially the misty nocturne of tree-trunks and a bridge, prick the imagination almost painfully. Starting with the pre-war Paris of light and shade, glitter and poverty, the scene shifts gradually to a monotone of queues, pinched faces, empty streets with an occasional bike or old-fashioned cab moving across. "Judisches Geschaft: Entreprise Juive," says the notice in a milliner's window. A few moments before we have turned the page to find a man with his eyes bandaged facing the firing-squad in some hidden high-walled corner. The

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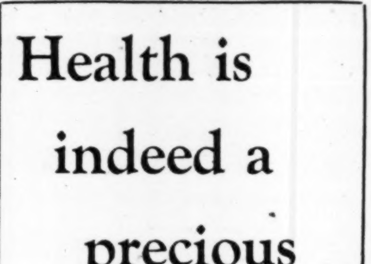

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Album contains forty good-sized pages, and in that space the camera, aided by M. Sidobre's text, has conveyed something of the charm and tragedy of Paris. He ranges from the familiar to the eloquent, and the word "crève-cœur," reiterated towards the end, will move even the reader who hasn't heard of Aragon.

Georges Gautier

### Political Thought in France From Sieyès to Sorel.

By J. P. Mayer. *Faber and Faber.* 8s. 6d.

Mr. Mayer's thoughtful study of French political ideas during the century that separates Napoleon from Mussolini, is suitably published at the moment when democracy has just unseated the dictator who boasted that liberty was a corpse. Goebbels declared that the Nazis had come to destroy all the principles of 1789. Mr. Mayer's main theme is that these ideas failed in France because equality was never reconciled with liberty. In a bourgeois world liberty has been confused with the rights of property and human equality with the right to fair treatment in the law courts.

Mr. Mayer is at his best in dealing with the interesting and complicating factor of the church of Rome which, though always officially on the side of the bourgeoisie and the remnant of the old aristocracy, has at intervals thrown up unorthodox thinkers like Lamennais and Jacques Maritain, who have seen that Christianity demands social equality. He argues that the failure to make the synthesis between equality and liberty has meant that France remained on the one hand an excessively anarchic and individualist nation, incapable finally of joint and impersonal sacrifice and, on the other, a nation divided within itself, not one nation but two, and therefore fatally weak in the final test of 1940.

Mr. Mayer quotes Péguy's epitaph on a generation which has thrown away religious faith and failed to create anything dynamic or socially inspiring out of the religion of scientific progress which was supposed to be an adequate alternative to Christianity. "We are the last, the very last. After us begins the world of those who no longer believe in anything and who make a glory and self-elevation of it." That indeed brings us to the summer of 1940; just what has happened to the minds of Frenchmen during the last three years neither Mr. Mayer nor we can yet be sure. He leaves us with the conclusion that without a social synthesis of equality and liberty within the nation and without a realisation of fraternity between nations a new political philosophy to satisfy the needs of twentieth century revolution cannot be formulated.

## Week-end Competitions

### No. 706

**Set by Arthur Marshall**

Certain comedians now advertise their wares on hoardings ("If it's laughter you're after," etc.) It is felt that the habit might spread to other performers and public figures and the usual prizes are offered for a set of three terse self-advertisements (either of the same character, or different ones) from the following:—Evelyn Laye, Dr. Joad, Sybil Thorndike, Noel Coward, Dr. Marie Stopes, Daphne du Maurier, General Montgomery, Joe Louis, Lady Astor, Stuart Hibberd, A. P. Herbert, Dr. Buchman.

Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, August 23rd.

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## RESULTS OF COMPETITION No. 703

**Set by H. N. Chittick**

The usual prizes are offered for a poem of not more than 20 lines, beginning "These I have loathed," and written in the manner of Rupert Brooke's "These I have loved."

**Report by H. N. Chittick**

Judging by the prodigious number of entries this was a long-awaited opportunity for a really good, calculated loathe; the poor setter, however, felt a little swamped and depressed after mentally wading through seas of dying fish and squashed frogs, being crooned at by choruses of scarlet-fingered females, and partaking of feasts of lumpy sago with stringy green rhubarb and charlady's tea.

Quite half of the hate-poems started with greasy and/or chipped plates; washing up evidently comes high among the things to be eliminated in the New World. Competitors were rather inclined to confine themselves to physical, fleshy revulsions, and to neglect the more subtle shudderings, which are often so unaccountable. Among these I liked especially Christine Addison's "The drag of finger-nails on serge"—though perhaps on silk is still more objectionable, as another suggested—and Allan M. Laing's "Harsh numbing taste of steel upon the tongue."

I sympathise with Miss Moncrieff over her "Agonising, long-drawn-out farewells on railway stations"; also with Margaret Hamilton's anathemas:

> "People in heatwaves, too sedately clothed;
> People who write at length on These I Have Loathed"

—especially, now, the last of these. Of the repulsive loathers. Didymus' "People who have wet fish for hands" is perhaps the horridest, with B. T.'s

> "Freak
> Sideshows, dwarfs, and not least,
> The human laugh that greets performing beasts."

The first prize goes to Cokent for a loathe that I am sure is most heart-felt; and the second to Yorick, who is to be congratulated on the success of his word-gymnastics in using not only Brooke's subject-matter, but also the original rhymes, although the originality and effect of his loathings had necessarily to suffer.

### FIRST PRIZE

These I have loathed:
The faint sweet smell of gin;
The false bonhomie and the fixèd grin;
The sickly humour of the dance-band yokel;
The poverty that calls a song a "vocal";
Closed windows: pale-hued, tasteless, soapy cheese:
Carven initials on the trunks of trees:
The loutish beast who breaks and scatters glass
Upon a seashore where the children pass:
White, flabby hands, and hand-clasps limp and dead:
Too youthful hat upon a greying head:
And scented cigarettes: and flowers close-packed:
And selfishness in children, all unsmacked:
Material minds that mock mankind's best dreamers;
Chars-a-banc parties' paper hats and "streamers";
The eructations of the motor-horn:
The trumpet's noble voice misused: the scorn
Which "patient merit of th'unworthy takes":
The feet of chicken: and the eyes of snakes:
The bleat of saxophones: the hate-full voice
And the salival viciousness of Joyce.

Cokent

### SECOND PRIZE

These I have loathed:
Chipped plates and cups clean-seeming
But dirty-thumb-marked; all-intrusive dust;
Black mud in London gutters; the strong thrust
Of "hearty" back-slaps; doubtful-tasting food;
Nightmares; and the acrid smell of soot;
And raindrops down my neck in sudden showers;
And rain itself that roughly scatters flowers
And ends our lease of summer all too soon;
Lodging-house cotton sheets; and fiends who "croon"—
(Hell swallow them !); and the rough male kiss
Of unshaved Wops; black-beetles; hair that is
Plastered with oil; corpse-shrouds; the insistent, mean,
Inhuman monotone of a machine;
The curse of luke-warm water; slugs to touch;
The reek of sweaty crowds; and other such,
The garlic-breath of Latin climes that lingers,
Or cloying scent of painted harlot's fingers; . . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . .

This one last verse I weave: that after men,
Good haters, sane and in their right minds clothed,
Shall murmur "These were beastly"; say "He loathed."

Yorick

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LARGE unfurnished house urgently wanted, accessible London, preferably Amersham/Gerrard's Cross district, where pleasant 4-bedroomed hse. could be let, pt. exch. Box 1438.

UNIVERSITY Lecturer, wife, and grown-up daughter require unfurnished flat, house, or part house, 5 rooms, in or near London coaching offered. State rent. Box 1501.

GT. MISSENDEN. Wnted. House, cottage, flat, pref. unfurn., mod. rental, for young scientist and wife. Occupy early Sept. Box 1217.

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**To Let—continued**

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SCOTTISH couple, boy 4, seek holiday 2 weeks between Aug. 21st and Sept. 15th, sea or hills pref., elsewhere rural considered. Prefer farm/cottage boarding, might exchange own flat, garden, Hampstead. Box 1486.

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**Accommodations—continued**

YOUNG man wants flat, or live in, Regents Park/Hampstead. Box 1461.

ROOM wanted in vegetarian family for woman worker in Hampstead or Cricklewood district. Some meals, no service. From August or September. Box 1471.

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